A

DISCOURSE

Of the Great

Disingenuity & *Unreasonableness*

Of Repining at

Afflicting Providences:

AND

Of the Influence which they ought to have upon us, on *Job* 2. 10.

Publish'd upon Occasion of the

DEATH

OF

Our Gracious Sovereign,

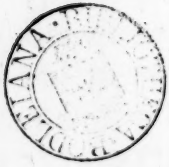
Queen Mary

Of Most Blessed Memory.

With a PREFACE containing some Observations, touching Her Excellent Endowments, and Exemplary Life.

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THE PREFACE Relating to the QUEEN.

Reader

THis *Plain* Diſcourſe *being deſign'd at firſt, to go no farther than the* Pulpit, *I was by the late moſt Afflicting Providence induced* (*as the Title Page tells you*) *to ſend it to the* Preſs: *Conſidering that a Diſcourſe of this Nature* (*tho' it can be at no time* Unſeaſonable) *can never be* more ſeaſonably *Publiſhed than at this*

Juncture; when there is as General a Lamentation for the Death of our most Gracious Queen, *as we have ever known for any Publick Calamity. And my design herein being to promote, what in me lyes, a due Acknowledgment of the Hand of* God *in all Afflictions, and to instruct those who need such Helps, how they are obliged to behave themselves under them, and how they ought to improve them; and to lay before them the most Perswasive Motives to such a Behaviour and Improvement; I humbly hope it may be in some measure serviceable to my* Country-men *in affecting them with such a Sense of this Heavy Stroke, as may have that happy Influence upon them, which I have here shewed, God, in His infinite Goodness, doth principally aym at, in all the Evils that befall us.*

And because the quicker sense we have

have of this Loſs, *there may be the more hope of our Compliance with Gods Deſign therein; and it being neceſſary to the retaining and more quickning our ſenſe thereof, to keep freſh in our Minds the Greatneſs of it, I can not but take this Occaſion to Repreſent, with an Equal mixture of Admiration and Grief, the* Excellency of the Perſon, *and therefore the* Greatneſs of the Bleſſing, *which we have loſt.*

But ſince it would be too great a Preſumption (in me *Eſpecially) to Pretend to give ſo full a* Deſcription *of Her Majeſties Virtues, and Her Natural and Acquired Accompliſhments, as may deſerve the Name of Her* Character, *I intend not much more, than to inſtance in* thoſe *which lay* moſt *open to Obſervation: But* thoſe *are enough to ſpeak Her,* The Glory of Her Sex.

We had very Admirable Accounts of Her, from Her Court at the Hague, *during Her Abode there, from most Unquestionable Testimonies, which made us Envy our Neighbours Happiness in Such a* Princess; *who* Knew *their Happiness, (as 'twas impossible they should not) and had an Extraordinary Value and Veneration for Her. And since Her Return to Her Native Country, and Her Advancement to the* Throne *here, we never knew a more Eminent* Exception *than* She *was to that Common Observation,* Minuit Præsentia Famam. The Fame that Persons had when Absent, suffers by their Presence.

The Queen had, to begin with Her intellectual *Endowments, an exceeding quick* Apprehension, *and as Clear and discerning a* Judgment. *The late Arch Bishop of* Canterbury *hath*

hath more than once Expreſſed to me great Admiration, at the Proofs He knew Her give of theſe Accompliſhments in the weighty Affaires of State, in the Kings Abſences, when the Executive part of the Government was in Her Hands. And, by the way, That Great and Excellent Man, whoſe Death is alſo much Bewailed, could not have Choſen a Time for His leaving the World, more happy for Himſelf, *than that which Providence Choſe for Him; ſince He eſcaped a very* Terrible Shock *by being* taken away *from the inexpreſſible Loſs we are now Lamenting, which was* then *at the* door.

The Queen hath left alſo a Great Name behind Her, for Her Wiſdom *and* Prudence *in the Management of whatſoever Buſineſs She was pleaſed to be concerned in. And in difficult Caſes no Perſon certainly,*

might more ſafely than She *be truſted, with that Advice of the* Son of Sirach, Let the Counſel of thine own Heart ſtand. *Several great Paſſages which I have had from the beſt hands do make me ſay* this.

And Her Perſon *was not more Amiable than was Her* Temper. *It was ſo far from having the leaſt Tincture of Pride, or Peeviſhneſs, or any thing diſtaſtful or diſobliging, that the Character of* Deliciæ Humani Generis, *might with as little ſuſpicion of Flattery be beſtowed on this Queen, as on that Lovely* Roman *Emperour, whoſe it was. Nay I am perſwaded, that never was ſo Great a Perſon ſo Great an Example of Condeſcending Courteſy, Kindneſs and Sweetneſs, as* She *was towards all about Her, or that made Addreſſes to Her; not Excepting the Meaneſt of Her poor Suppli-*

cants,

cants, who were very Numerous. As more of true Majesty was never seen in a Sovereign, than in Her, So never appeared less of Loftiness, or of Contemptuous Behaviour in a Subject. In the several Yearly Courses of my Waiting upon Her as Chaplain, I can truly say, I could never observe Her, to the best of my remembrance, either by any thing She said or by Her manner of speaking or by so much as a Look, to be Angry or out of Humour.

She did not seem to have any thing of Melancholy in Her Natural Complexion, and yet, which is very Extraordinary, She was at a great distance from the other Extreme. She was Easie, Free and Chearful, but without the least appearance of Levity. She would neither be overwhelmed with Grief, nor transported with Joy;

Joy, and yet was far from a Stoick; *Her Temper was sufficiently impressible. She hath been seen to Shed Tears, with great Tenderness, for the Death of a Person She had an Esteem for, and would Express a* due *Sense at the hearing of Unwelcome Tidings; And She had a great deal of* Sympathy, *and* Compassion *in Her Nature, as* will *be shewn: Yet She still bore Afflictions with great Patience; they could not Extort from Her an Unseemly Word, nor make Her Uneasy to any Body but Her self.*

Her parting with His Majesty once a Year was always Grievous to Her, and a Cloud afterward appeared upon Her Countenance for a time, but it was even Astonishing to observe, not only how soon she Overcame Her Sorrow, and Cleared up again, but also with what Evenness and Composedness of Mind,

she

she could bear his Long Absences, and the Thoughts of the infinite Dangers to which He Exposed his Royal Person. I say this was very wonderful, Considering that She was a Pattern for the Best of Wives; *She always Expressed the Tendereſt Affection to, and the Higheſt Value for, the King Her Husband. And therefore it was impoſſible for Her, notwithſtanding the Happineſs of Her Temper, ſo to demean Her ſelf under ſuch a Tryal, had She not a great Faith in the Divine Protection, being aſſured of His being Engaged in the Beſt of Cauſes.*

Such a Pattern was the Queen of Sobriety *and freeneſs from* Vanity, *that I am ſorry ſo few of our Ladies could ever perſwade themſelves to have the Ambition herein to reſemble Her: And that (contrary to the Cuſtom, which till this Reign hath* here *no leſs*

Prevailed,

Prevailed, than in other Countries) *the Example of a* Queen *ſhould be of little force; nay of* So little, *as not to be able to make ſuch Childiſh Vanities as* Spotted-Faces, *out of faſhion.*

And tho' Queens *of all Ladies may be* (*I hope*) *Excuſed, if they ſhould exceed in their* Wardrobe, our *Queen was ſo far from being lyable to Cenſure upon that account, that a Gentleman of great Worth, whoſe Office would not let him be Ignorant of Her Expences, did ſometime ſince Profeſs, that* he was very unwilling to ſay how little ſhe laid out upon Apparel.

And as to the Sobriety which relates to the Palate, *She was ſo far from being fond of great Dainties, that I heard Her once ſay, that* She could live in a Dairy.

What an enemy She was to Idleneſs, *even in* Ladies, *Thoſe who had the Ho-*

Honour to ſerve Her, are living inſtances. It is well known how great a part of the day they were employed at their Needles, *& ſeveral Ingenuities; the Queen Herſelf, when more Important Buſineſs would give Her leave, Working with them. And, that their Minds might be well Employed at the ſame time, it was Her Cuſtome to Order one to read to them, while they were at work; either* Divinity, *or ſome Profitable* Hiſtory.

And what a value She ſet on Time, *appeared by Her leaving Her* Pillow *by* Six *in the Morning, and Her late Returns to it: And by the* Hours *which She daily ſpent in Her* Cloſet. *And 'twas Admirable to ſee how She would Contrive, to be as little as needs muſt out of Buſineſs. She did not ſpare ſo much as Her* Dreſſing *time from it: Which was after She had been*

firſt

first in Her Closet about half an hour, and then, after a Dish of Tea or Chocolat, about two hours more. She appointed Her Levy (that is Her Dressing time) for the Receiving of Petitions, and doing what other Business could then conveniently be dispatch't. And even now also would She have Reading when there was a vacancy for it. And this was the time which the Ladies knew to be most acceptable for the receiving of Visits, because then they would least hinder Business. As for those Ladies who came at Her Working time, they knew they should not be welcome, except they work't too.

Between the Chappel-Prayers and Dinner, She would commonly walk into the Gardens, and there see how the Gardners had observed Her Orders, and farther appoint them what to do.

But

But we must return to Her Closet, *where,* how *She employed Herself, we may more than guess, by the Choyce Collection of Books She furnished it with; as well of* Divinity, *as* History, *and other Learned and Ingenious Treatises; and by the great improvement of Her Mind She gained by them: Which those Worthy Men who were Her Chaplains in* Holland, *and the Learned Clerk of Her Closet here (who also for several years waited on Her* there*) can abundantly Witness. Those* Histories *She spent most time in, were such as by which She might be best Accomplished, for the most Difficult and Weighty Employment of a* Sovereign *Queen. And as to* Divinity, *She had been such a Student therein, as well to know, upon what* Grounds *and* Reasons, *She ought undoubtedly to Believe*

lieve the Gospel of our Saviour, *& the Evidence we have for the Truth thereof: And not only to have the truest understanding thereof, whereby She could well distinguish between the true Teachers and the Corrupters of the Christian Doctrine, but to be able to defend it, and Especially against those of the* Roman *Communion; Her greatest danger, as I need not say, having been from* that *Quarter.*

And 'tis highly worth our Notice, *what a notable Insight She had into the Errours of that Church, and how understandingly She would Argue against some of those Errours, when very* Young, *and what a warm Zeal She would even then express against* Popery; *for which she got the* Name *of* Queen Bess, *from her Uncle* King Charles.

And a Second Q. Elizabeth *She proved*

proved to be, both in regard of Her immoveable Conſtancy in adhering to the Proteſtant Religion, againſt vigorous Aſſaults, which have not hitherto been made Publick; and of her great Affection to the Church of England, *for whoſe true and juſt intereſt She was much concerned. But yet Her Love to this* Church *did not leven Her Mind, with any ſour Prejudices againſt* Other *Proteſtant Churches, as That of* Holland *found by Experience; nor leſſened Her Charity towards Sober Diſſenters among Our ſelves.*

I am as ſenſible as my Reader, that I have now a little deviated from the Rules of Method; but it is more pardonable to give You ſuch Remarks as Theſe *in a leſs proper place, than to forget them, when I have a fitter for them.*

And now ſhall I need to add, that our Incomparable QUEEN *was alſo a Perſon of moſt ſincere and Unaffected* Devotion and Piety? *whether there be need of it or no, I cannot decline this Subject.*

She was, if Compariſons may be made, Moſt Exemplary *in Her* Piety.

It is very well Known, in the Firſt *place, how ſtrictly Conſcientious She was in the Obſervation of the* Lord's Day; *and that as well Privately, as in the Publick Aſſemblies.*

As She enjoyned Preaching *in the Chapple-Royal after the Evening Prayers (though there were always Prayers, and a Sermon* twice *every Sunday Morning) and likewiſe* two *Sermons, with the Prayers,*

on

on all the Monthly Fasts, so was She constantly a most Serious and Devout Attender on them both parts of those days. As She was also on the Lords Supper, the First Sunday of every Month. And She was observed to spend more Time than ordinary in Her Closet, not onely the Day, but also the Week before every Communion.

Nor could any Business detein Her from Her Private Chappel, neither Mornings nor Evenings, throughout the Week. In all the Times of my Waiting, I never knew Her once absent. And whensoever She had Occasion to go Abroad a Mornings, She gave Order for the Prayers before She went; or if She intended to return to Dinner, She would have them, tho' late, before She sate down at Table.

And whereas it was the Practice in former *Reigns, to have onely the* Second *Leſſon for the Morning and Evening Service read in the Private Chappel, She Commanded to have* both *for the future. And it ſo fell out, that I had the Honour of* firſt *receiving this Her Pious Command.*

But Her Piety was far from being confined to Her Chappels and Cloſet; She was every where *a like Pious in various Inſtances. A Reverence of the Deity ſhewed it ſelf in* every *thing She ſaid or did.*

Who *ever heard Her take the Name of* God *or of our* Saviour *into Her Mouth, in too light or vain a manner? Tho' this Practice is grown ſo common, as to be little ſcrupled by very many, whom we may not cenſure as not truly Religious*

ligious. Such is the Force of a General Cuſtom.

I do not, you ſee, ſpeak of Profaining Gods Name by vain Swearing, *for it would be much too little a thing to ſay of ſuch a* Saint, *that She abhorred* this, *but of all* irreverend Uſe thereof; *but of* this, *I ſay, our Bleſſed Queen did make great Conſcience.*

And ſo did She no leſs, of Cenſuring *and ſpeaking ill of Others, and of all other Liberties, which even great Profeſſors of Religion do too commonly give themſelves in Talking. And therefore She was one of St.* James *his* Perfect *Women; for ſaith he,* If any offend not in Tongue, the ſame is a Perfect Man.

And it is no Wonder, if She, who could ſo perfectly govern Her

Speech, ſhould be as void of Offence in all Her Actions. *And it is certain, that ſo She was.*

So Extraordinary Strict was Her Majeſties Life, even from Her Youth, *that for the* Seventeen *Years of Her* Married *State, The King, as he hath Profeſſed,* Could never ſee any thing in Her, which He could call a Fault. *And no Man can keep a Stricter Guard upon his words, than his Majeſty is always obſerved to do.*

And as to the Poſitive *inſtances of the Queens Piety, or Fear of God, they were ſuch as ſhewed She made no leſs Conſcience of Sins of* Omiſſion, *than of* Commiſſion.

I might ſpeak of the Pious Care She took of Her immediate Attendants; and how concerned She was,

to

to have them ſecured from Temptations, when they had occaſion to go abroad. But I cannot omit One *Paſſage, which is an Equal Inſtance both of Her Piety and Humility. She having condeſcended to be* God-Mother *to a Daughter of one of Her Servants, and calling to mind thoſe Words at the end of the* Office of Baptiſm; You are to take Care, that this Child be brought to the Biſhop to be Confirmed by him, *&c. She not onely took* this *Care of Her* God-Daughter, *but in Order to Her due Preparation for* Confirmation, *would inſtruct her* Herſelf, *and hear her ſay her* Catechiſm. *She did not think it enough, to Command one of Her Servants, or the* Clerk of Her Cloſet, *to do this Office.*

And

And how great a concern She had for the Reforming of the Manners of Her Subjects, *in this very Loose Age, appeared, by Her most Pious* Letter *to the Justices of* Middlesex: *Wherein She vigorously Excited them to do their Duty, according to their Oaths, in Executing the Laws against Swearers and Cursers, and Profaners of the* Lords day, *and all Debauched Persons.*

And Her Majesties Charity *ought to be taken notice of next after Her* Piety; *in which most Christian Grace, it is impossible So Excellent a Person in all other Respects, should be defective.*

The Queen could well distinguish, between the Religion *of the* Means *and of the* End. *And no one can be more sensible, than* She *was, how*

how little *Praying, Hearing, Reading and the Sacraments do signify, to those who place the Whole of Religion in such Things, as Necessary as they are. She knew that the Design of these Great Duties, is the making us more and more to Partake of a Divine God-like Nature; the Subduing of all Corrupt Affections and inordinate Appetites, and the making us forward to all Good works.*

And it is Evident, that these *were the Ends She propounded to Herself, in all Acts of Devotion; as by Her great Proficiency in* Other *Virtues, so particularly by Her Excelling in Works of* Mercy *and* Charity.

She filled Her Almoners *with Business of this kind, more perhaps than any King or Queen Ever did*

in

in this Kingdom, within ſuch a ſpace of Time. And that not only in Diſtributions at Home, but alſo in Foreign Parts, among Poor Sufferers for the Sake of Chriſt.

And I have good reaſon to believe from what I Know, *that Her* Own *Hands were likewiſe large Diſpenſers of very Private Charities.*

And it is ſtrange, that Her Memory ſhould ſerve Her to be ſo Punctual as She was, in the Payment of Her Private Penſions, at the Times She had ſet for it, without being put in mind of thoſe Times when they came. And Her Memory was no leſs Faithful in reference to the Performance of Her Gracious Promiſes; *as I have known by* Experience.

Theſe things, I ſay, are very Strange, Conſidering how Her Mind was always Loaded with Buſineſs;

and

and with Buſineſs of the greateſt Weight & Importance, eſpecially when the King was Abroad: Which I think hath moſtly been for the greater *Part of Every Year. But it ſeems She thought nothing could be of* greater *Importance, than Works of* Charity.

In the Laſt Place, I cannot forbare taking notice of Another Rare Endowment with which Her Majeſty was Adorned, and which few would expect to find in the Character of a Woman, *tho' a* Queen, *viz.* Courage *and* Fortitude. *Herein was She alſo a* Second Queen Elizabeth.

This was Eminently demonſtrated by Her Manly (Her more *than Manly) Behaviour, when the* French Bravadoed *it upon our Coaſt: And*

great

great Danger apprehended from our Busy Enemies at Home, *and of Treachery in our* Navy; *and The King then in very difficult Circumstances in* Ireland.

So that the Streight, the Queen was now in, seemed much like that *of* David *at* Ziklag; *and much Greater than* that *of Queen* Elizabeth *at* Tilbury. *But* now *did She demean Herself, not only as That* Queen, *but as* David *did at that Time,* She Encouraged Herself in the Lord Her God. *And Those who should have Animated* Her, *had She* need *of being Animated by them, were chiefly supported by the Observations they made of the Admirable presence of Mind, She all along shewed. Minding the Business which the Exegency of Affairs called for, and Expressing no diffidence of Success.* And

And this, *no doubt, was one of those Times, to which a Noble* Earl *referred, in* this *Saying which I heard from him,* viz. We have owed our Safety more than Once, to the Queens Care and Vigilancy. *And he was at such a* Poſt, *in all the moſt difficult part of Their Majeſties Reign, as to be* beſt *Able of any Miniſter of State, to ſay* this *of his* own *Knowledge.*

I cannot here Omit the mentioning, (*tho' it would have better come in before*) *what Another Great Perſon, very Eminent for* Piety *as well as Parts and Learning, with whom the Queen frequently Converſed, did ſay to* me *of Her, about* Four *Years ſince,* viz. She is ſo Good, that when I Compare my ſelf with Her, I am Aſhamed to find, how much I fall ſhort of Her.

She

She was so great an Example of Piety and every Virtue, that Considering them altogether, it can be no Hyperbole *to say, Certainly a Greater never Graced a Throne. She had the Virtues of the Best Princes, without the least Mixture of those Failings, with which the Names of most of them are Stained in History.*

As to that One (*that* onely) *Thing, which our* Male-Contents *would fix as a foul* Blot *upon Her Majesties Memory; would they once be Perswaded to lay aside their Prejudices, and the groundless Notions they have Entertained, it is impossible they should not at length see, with the Generality of their Protestant Brethren, not only at Home, but throughout Christendom, that*

That

That which they would make such an Hainous Crime in the King and Queen, is rather an Instance of Heroick Virtue.

As to the King, *What greater Demonstrations can they desire, than He hath given them, of his not having been Acted in what so much Offends them, by Aspiring Ambition? For had He been induced by so very Bad a Principle, to take upon Him the Government of* these *Kingdoms, Are they able to imagine He would have Harassed Himself, and run so many Tremendous Hazards, as He hath done ever since, both by Land and Sea? Can they think it Possible for Him to chuse such a Life, had He Accepted of* Three *Crowns for the Pleasure of* Wearing *them?*

Had this *been his Ultimate Design, His Haughty* Neighbour *had*

too many Irons in the Fire, to have given Him the leaſt Diſturbance in the Enjoyment of His Acquiſitions: And would have Thanked Him to let Him have owned Him for His Brother; and to have conſented to ſuch a League with Him, as that *he made with the Late* Uſurper: *And would no more have been King* James's *Friend, than he was King* Charles's, *when He fled to him for Succour; but would have ſerved the One as he did the Other.*

Thoſe know Nothing *of that Prince who hath made himſelf ſo* well *known to All* Europe, *that can make the leaſt* doubt *of this.*

One would think therefore, that Malice it ſelf ſhould not need to be ſatisfied, That King William *Accepted not of theſe Crowns, otherwiſe than as a Means to the Nobleſt of Ends,*

viz.

viz. *The Rescuing of both These and the Neighbouring Nations, from Popery, Oppression and Slavery.*

And would the Men I am dealing with, have had the Queen obstruct This Glorious Work, by Refusing to sit with her Royal Husband upon the English Throne, merely because That Prince was her Father *who left it Empty? When if He could have been satisfied, not to Subject Himself to the* Tripple Crown, *and not to be Governed by the Counsels of* Jesuites, *and by the Dictates of the Greatest Enemy we are capable of having; and to let his People enjoy their* Religion, *and* Laws; *He might have Reigned as happily, notwithstanding his being a Son of the Church of* Rome, *as ever did Any of His Royal* Protestant *Predecessors.*

Should the Queen have been so

Wilful, *as to prefer the* False *Interest of a* Father, *to both the Temporal and* Spiritual *Interest of many Whole* Nations (*to the Interest of so many* Millions *of Bodies and* Souls *too*) *She would have left a Blot* indeed *upon Her* now *Spotless and most Precious Memory.*

In what I have here said of Her Majesty, Which is Extreamly little, *Considering what She deserved, I sincerely Profess that I have no other Aim, but to make us the more Affected with that Sad Providence, which hath deprived Us of Her; in Order to our making that good improvement thereof which God Expecteth.*

Had the Queens High Deserts been Published in Her Life time, the Publisher ought to have been content to be Cryed Shame of, as a Foolish Fulsome Flat-

Flatterer; And that I may not now incur the Suſpition of Flattery, you ſee how ſparing I have been in ſpeaking of the King. *But* this *I may be allowed to ſay of his Majeſty, That He had an High Eſteem for His Royal Conſort, upon the account both of Her Wiſdom and Piety.*

And the King Bewails Her Death, as an unſpeakable Loſs to Himſelf, *as well as to His* People. *He declared, like a good Chriſtian, when He had no Hope of Her Life, That* He did not Repine at the Will of God: *But yet the Thoughts of His Parting with Her did Put Him, as Great a Soul as He hath, into Terrible* Agonies. *Which were ſo far from being* Blame-*Worthy, that they made His* Submiſſion *to That Hand, which gave Him this Bitter Cup to drink,*

the more like His Blessed Saviours.

And the Queens Death *was such as it might have been Presumed, such a* Life *would End in. Upon Her having the first Intimation of the Danger She was in, She Replyed to this Effect*: I have been instructed by the Divines of our Church, how very Hazardous a thing it is to Rely upon a Death-Bed Repentance; and I am not now to begin the Great Work of Preparing for Death: And, I Praise God, I am not Afraid of it.

And She was so Composed *throughout Her Sickness, that 'twas Evident She had not the least disturbance upon Her Mind; but that all was Calm and Serene within Her. One of Her* Physicians (*a very Worthy Gentleman*) *was so Affected with the*

the Observations he then made of Her, as since to say, She seemed to me, more like an Angel, than a Woman.

Frequently She called for the Prayers, *which my Lord of* Canterbury *still read to Her; And about* Twelve *hours before Her Departure, She Comfortably received the* Holy Communion *at his Hands,* Seven Bishops *Communicating with Her. And at last She went away as quietly as a Lamb, with* Her Works following Her.

Oh! What a Dark, What a Black Christmas *hath* this *Year brought us! We may well apply thereto* those *Words in the Prophesy of* Amos, It shall come to Pass, saith the Lord, that I will cause the Sun to go

down at Noon-Day, (*and it was ſcarce Noon-day, with This our Bright Sun, when it ſett*) and I will turn your Feaſts into Mourning, and all your Songs into Lamentation.

And now, if my Grief could Permit me farther to Aggravate this our Loſs, after the Faithful Repreſentation, as defective as it is, which hath been given of the Worth of the Jewel *we have loſt, it would not ſignifie much to you: ſince the Loſs is ſuch, as that you can* Conceive, *much better than I can* Expreſs *the Greatneſs of it. And if it be not Year after Year more and more Felt, and therefore better Underſtood, it will be what we have as little reaſon as can be, to expect.*

And nothing but wretched Inconſideration

ſideration can make us Fearleſs of its being deſigned for a Preſage and Forerunner of other Calamities; while we continue ſo Bad a People, notwithſtanding the Great Bleſſings, both Spiritual and Temporal, which our Nation hath had a long Enjoyment of, above all other Parts of Chriſtendom: *And while moſt Countries about us have lain under Oppreſſion and Tyranny, and been in Blood and Confuſion: And notwithſtanding our late moſt wonderful Deliverance, and the ſtrange and unexpected Things which God hath ſince done for us, towards the Securing and the Perfecting thereof.*

The moſt ſerious People are much afraid, That Her Majeſty is taken away from the Evil to come, *when they Reflect upon the High Provocation, we have given to the* Divine

Divine *Majesty*, *by our Obstinate Aversion to the least Reformation, either of Manners, or of any thing Amiss, after all the Marvellous Interpositions of Providence, in the Behalf both of our Church and State.*

God saw Her to be incomparably too Good for a People, who would not Mend in the least by Her Example: And therefore what can we reasonably think, but that He took Her hence in just Judgment to Us, *tho' in infinite Mercy to* Herself. *At least, this sad Conclusion may be made from this Providence, if we should be as insensible of the Hand of God in our Loss of Her, as we have been of the Blessing we had in Her, while we enjoyed Her. And Her Kingdoms might have enjoyed Her more than* Forty *Years longer, had they better deserved Her.*

Had

Had Her Life been prolonged to ſuch *a Number of Years, it would have been no ſtrange thing, conſidering Her Temperance, and the Healthfulneſs and Strength of Her Conſtitution.*

We can aſſign no mere Natural Reaſon, Why She might not at leaſt *have lived to the Age of Queen* Elizabeth, *who dyed before She was* Seventy *Years Old, and yet was* Thirty Eight *Years Elder than our Bleſſed Queen* Mary.

And if it ſhould prove, That this ſad ſtroke ſhould be loſt *upon us, what Cauſe may we have to dread, a yet* Sadder! *I mean the loſing of our* King *too, who may well be called,* The very Breath of our Noſtrils, *ſince the Prophet* Jeremiah *did ſo ſtile a Prince, who deſerved not to be Named on the ſame day with* Him. *And*

And well *may I say, that the Loss of King* William, *would be the Greatest, that (Humanly speaking) can befal us: Since those are worse than Blind, who will not see, That the Safety of these Nations, and of at least all our* Protestant *Neighbours, doth wholly, under God Almighty, depend upon His Precious Life; and must necessarily so do in the Eye of Reason, while our Circumstances continue as they are* Abroad.

Should God call the King from us, before our Danger from France *is Over, I can not think but the Faces of many of his Professed* Enemies *would soon gather Blackness, at the Scaring Prospect which those who can see but one* Inch *before them, must needs* then *have a Clear sight of. And then it may Endanger their Losing that Sense they*

have

have left *them, to Reflect upon their Prodigious insensibility of their* own *interest, whether they Ever Come or no, to have any Concernment for the* Publick.

And what Cause have we to Pray Heartily for the Kings Long and Prosperous Reign Over us, from Affection to Him *as well as to* Our Selves! *Since to* Him, *as Gods great Instrument, We Owe the Preservation of our Religion, and of all that is Dear to us!*

To Conclude, Those who are so Irreligious as to look no farther, than the Natural Cause of the Queens Death, are never like to be Bettered thereby. But Such as are duly Sensible of Gods Hand therein; who could easily have Prevented it without a Miracle, and by his Ordinary Providence

dence too, had He seen it in His infinite Wisdom Fit; Can not but See what an Awakening Providence This is, Loudly Calling upon us to Attone His Wrath, by deep Humiliation, Hearty Repentance and Reformation.

But let the Consequents of this Stroke be never *so Sad, we ought, with Holy King* David, To be dumb, and not open our Mouths, because it was Gods doing: *And to say,* Righteous art Thou O Lord, and just, *most just,* are Thy Judgments.

And indeed *to have such a Blessing as This, Snatcht away from us, and one so Qualified in all respects, and so* desirous *too, to make us (in Conjunction with Her Royal Companion*

panion in the Throne) *both a Good and a Flouriſhing People; and that in the very Flower of Her Years, and in an Age which could* worſt *Spare Her; Religion being now at ſo low an Ebb, and Wickedneſs and* Infidelity *ſo Abounding;* This *is* Such *a Calamity, as no Conſiderations can Support Good People under it, like the Thoughts of* His *Hands being in it from whence* we receive all our Good, and therefore ought to receive Evil: *And the Aſſurance we have, that* Our *Mighty Loſs is* Her *Infinite Gain.*

Edward Gloucester.

Job, II. x.

What? Shall we receive Good at the Hand of God, and ſhall we not receive Evil?

THe Wicked Speech of *Job*'s Wife in the foregoing Verſe, was the occaſion of theſe Words. Obſerving his perſeverance in his Integrity; and not onely his Patient Submiſſion to, but alſo Thankful Acquieſcence in the Will of God, under the Heavieſt of Calamities, ſhe brake out into theſe moſt Impious and Blaſphemous Words, as they are in our *Tranſlation, Doſt thou ſtill retein thine Integrity? Curſe God and dye.* Where-

upon the Holy Man gives her this Reply, *Thou ſpeakeſt as one of the fooliſh Women ſpeaketh; What? Shall we receive Good at the Hand of God, and ſhall we not receive Evil?*

That ſpeech of hers is variouſly rendred, but I ſhall onely Obſerve,  that the Hebrew Word which is here Tranſlated *Curſe*, *properly* ſignifies the contrary, *Bleſs*. The Old Latin Verſion ſo renders it in this Place; but I acknowledge ſo it doth too, in that ſaying of the *Devil*, *He will Curſe Thee to Thy face*; where the ſame Word is uſed, but our Tranſlation *there* muſt needs be right.

But I have thought it ſtrange, that the *Septuagint* ſhould render this Speech of *Job*'s Wife, *Blapheme God and dye*; where the Word may very well ſignifie *Bleſs*; and yet render that other of the *Devil*, *He will Bleſs Thee to thy face*; where 'tis manifeſt it muſt ſignifie *Curſe*; as it does in ſome few other Texts.

Εἰπὸν τὸ ῥῆμα πρὸς Θεὸν.

Εὐλογήσει.

In ſhort, I ſee no reaſon why we ſhould not (with ſome of our moſt Learned Expoſitors) underſtand this

Word

Word *here* according to its *Proper* ſignification; and ſo make *Job*'s Wife to ſay to him, *Bleſs God and dye.*

You may Object, Why then ſhould theſe Words ſo ſtrike *Job* to the heart, as his Reply ſhews they did, *viz. Thou ſpeakeſt as one of the fooliſh Women ſpeaketh*; that is, Thou ſpeakeſt like a *Wicked Wretch.*

I Anſwer, That 'tis too evident theſe Words were ſpoken *Tauntingly*, and therefore well deſerved ſo ſevere a Rebuke: They may be thus Paraphras'd: *I ſee thou art a wonderful Thankful Man: Thou canſt bleſs God, when of a vaſtly Rich Man, He makes thee a Beggar; when of a Father, of no fewer than Ten Children, He makes thee Childleſs in a Moment: Go on to Bleſs Him ſtill, ſince thou haſt ſo great Encouragement; the Reward He deſigns thee being the deſtroying of thee, next after thy Children.*

And this ſaying, *Bleſs God and dye*, uſed as a *Taunt*, I need not tell you was highly daring and preſumptuous; tho' not ſo Horribly Profane as *Curſe God and dye.*

In Diſcourſing on the *Latter* Part of *Job*'s Admirable Reply, *What? Shall we receive Good at the Hand of God, and ſhall we not receive Evil?* I ſhall endeavour to ſhew,

I. *That* Evil *proceeds from the Hand of God as well as* Good.
II. *What is meant by* Receiving *Evil at His Hand.*
III. *How our Receiving* Good *is a* Motive *to receive* Evil *at His Hand too: Or where in lies the* Force *of this Motive.*
IV. *I ſhall draw ſeveral* Inferences *from the whole.*

Firſt, That Evil *proceeds from the Hand of God, as well as* Good. Or, that Evil Events as well as good, are from the Divine Providence. You ſee I ſhall take it *for granted* that *Good* things are all from God; and well I may, ſince *Tully* could ask, *Why do we Worſhip Him, or Pray to Him, if it were otherwiſe?* And he thought, with *Poſidonius* before him, that a Man cannot *deny* this, but he muſt be

Quod ni ita ſit, quid Venera-mur quid Precamur Deos? De *Nat. Deor.*

be an *Atheist*; and therefore made no *better* Men of *Epicurus* and his Followers, tho' none did more Profess the Belief of a Deity.

But we will a little Enquire, Whether *Evil* things do come also from God's Hand; because those who have the Highest Thoughts of the Divine Goodness, may be most apt to Question how God can be the Author of any Evil; How out of the same Fountain can Flow, both Sweet Streams and Bitter; Or rather, How Bitterness can issue forth from the Fountain of Sweetness.

Now that *this* is very Accountable, will chiefly appear from what we are to say *hereafter*. Our present Business is to shew, That Evils *do* proceed from the Hand of God; as also *what* Hand He hath in them.

That they *do* proceed from His Hand, is so evident from the Holy Scriptures, that nothing is more evident. God Almighty saith by His Prophet *Isaiah*, Ch. 45. 7. *I form the Light, and create Darkness; I make Peace, and create Evil: I the Lord*

do all these things. And by His Prophet *Amos*, Ch. 3. 6. *Shall there be Evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it?* And by His Servant *Moses*, Deut. 32. 39. *See now, that I even I am He, and there is no God with me; I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my Hand.* And all the *Threatnings* in the Book of God do suppose *this.*

And therefore we there find Good Men, still acknowledging God's Hand in their Afflictions. Thus Upright *Job*, upon his receiving the Tydings of his Prodigious Losses, saith, *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away*, &c. Ch. 1. 21. The Lord hath *taken away*, as well as *given.* King *David* we find frequently making such Acknowledgments. And our Blessed *Saviour* calls his Sufferings, *The Cup which his Father had given him to drink.*

And indeed the *Pagans* had generally this sense of the Evils (especially the Greater) that befell them, as well as of their Good Things: And

And therefore they had their *Catharmata*, and many Expiatory Rites, for the Pacifying of their Gods, whensoever Calamities of any kind did light upon them.

Now in order to our Understanding *What* Hand God hath in Evils, we are to take Notice.

1. That they do not ordinarily proceed *immediately* from His Hand: Nay we have no reason to believe that any Evils ever do, but 'tis probable that those do proceed from *Invisible* second Causes, which do not from *Visible*.

2. Nor is it necessary to make Evils, at least *Ordinarily*, the Effects of Second Causes, by any *positive* Act of God, whereby he useth those Causes as his *Instruments* in the most proper and strict sence of that Word. But it may be enough to say, upon the falling out of Disasters, that His good Providence did not interpose, in preventing those Evil Effects being produced by their Causes. Nor can we certainly conclude, that ever God doth any more than withhold

his wonted Protection in such Cases.

3. Evils may be truly of God's *Appointing*, tho' not caused by any Positive Act of His. And whensoever His Providence suffers us to fall into such Circumstances, as that certain Evils inevitably light upon us, and no Care could prevent them; then, at least, we may look upon them as being of the Divine Appointment, no less than Permission.

And even those may be so, which are the Effects of other Peoples *Wickedness*. As when the Pride, or Covetousness, or Malice of another makes me a Sufferer. For the Opportunities and Advantages which a wicked Man may at any time have against me, are from the Divine Providence. So that, tho' it be infinitely unworthy of God, to infuse Evil Affections, Inclinations or Dispositions into any man, or to excite any one to *Sin*, yet He knowing such Affections and Inclinations to be in such Persons, and that they only want Objects or Opportunities for the *Acting* of them, He may make use of them,

them, for the ſcourging of ſuch Particular Sinners, or for the Tryal of ſuch or ſuch of His Servants.

We have an Inſtance hereof in *Shimei*'s *Curſing King* David. Upon *Abiſhai*'s ſaying, *Why ſhould this dead Dog Curſe my Lord the King? Let me I pray thee go over, and take off his Head:* The King thus Reply'd, *Let him Curſe, becauſe the Lord hath ſaid unto him, Curſe* David; *who ſhall then ſay, Wherefore haſt thou done ſo?* 2 Sam. 16. 9.

David could not mean by theſe Words, that God had laid His *Command* upon that Wretch to Curſe him; This would have been to make him no Sinner herein, but His Obedient Servant. But his Meaning was, That God had by his Providence given *Shimei* this Opportunity of inſulting over him, and venting his Spite upon him. And therefore the good King concluded that God in juſt Judgment did now ſcourge him with the Tongue of *Shimei*, as He had done by the Sword of his Son *Abſalom*.

And thus God calls the *Aſſyrian*, *The Rod of his Anger*, and ſaith that *He* Eſay 10. 5, 6.

He will ſend him againſt an Hypocritical Nation. And by this Phraſe, we are to underſtand, God's ſo Ordering it, as that all Difficulties and Diſcouragements ſhould be removed out of his way to the invading of the *Iſraelites*; which He knew he was prepared in mind to do, as ſoon as he could have an Opportunity. Nor are we to think it ſtrange that ſuch Words, as *Sending*, *Commanding*, *Doing*, *Determining*, and many other like them, ſhould be uſed onely to Expreſs, either *removing Rubs out of the way to certain Evils*, (whether Natural or Moral) or *bare Permiſſions*; ſince theſe ways of Speaking are *Hebrew Idioms*, and as ordinary as can be in the *Jewiſh* Language: Of which there are innumerable Inſtances in *Holy Scripture:* I will Name one more, *viz.* that in *Acts* 4. 28. where God's *Hand* and *Counſel* and *Determination* are ſaid to be in the Horrible Death and Sufferings of *His Holy Child Jeſus.* But 'tis as evident as that 'tis impoſſible for God to be the *Author of Sin*, that thoſe Phraſes ſignifie

nifie no more than His *Permitting*, or *Decreeing* to permit thoſe Sufferings to be inflicted by His Enemies, and His ſo Ordering it in His Wiſe Providence, as that all Impediments to the Executing of their Malice, ſhould be removed.

And we may well ſay, that God's Hand is in the Evils which befal Men, tho' there ſhould be no poſitive Act of His Hand in them, ſince the Evils of which *Job* ſaith, *Shall we not receive them at the Hand of God?* Were all inflicted by the Hand of the *Devil*, through *His* Permiſſion. All his Heavy Calamities were the Effects of Satan's Malice, and conſequent upon God's not reſtreining him from venting it as he did.

It appears by the Story, that it was the *Devil* who ſtirred up the *Sabeans* and others to Rob him of his Cattle, and to deſtroy his Servants: That it was the *Devil* that brought down the Fire on the remainder of them, altho' it be called the *Fire of God from Heaven:* That it was the *Devil* who raiſed the Storm, which blew

blew down the Houſe upon his Sons and Daughters: That it was *He* who filled his Body with Blains & Botches. And theſe Terrible Evils were not onely *Permitted* by God, but *Appointed* too, but His Appointment took place through His mere Permiſſion: As knowing that Satan was enough his Enemy, to bring all theſe Calamities upon him, and worſe too, if He would but ſuffer him. There is no more than *Permiſſion*, or *not hindering* to be underſtood in that Saying of the Divine Majeſty to him, *Behold all that he hath is in thy Power*, &c. *Chap.* 1. 12. Or in *that*, *Behold he is in thine Hand*, &c. Chap. 2. 6. Not that God gave him a *Commiſſion*, or ſo much as *Leave* (or Licence) thus to Torment the Upright Man; He onely withdrew the Reſtreints he was before under, from thus Worrying him. This is evident from the Account which the Devil himſelf gives of his having hitherto ſpared him, Chap. 1. 10. *Haſt thou not*, ſaith he, *made an Hedge about him, and about his houſe, and about all that he hath on every*

every ſide? And whereas he ſaith in the next Verſe, *But put forth thine Hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will Curſe thee to thy Face:* It is plain, he meant no more by theſe Words, but *Ceaſe to protect him from my hand:* And in ſo Expreſſing this his Meaning, he complyed with the fore-mentioned *Hebrew Idiom*, or *Manner of Speaking.*

Before we proceed further, Let us ſtop a while to take Notice, how infinitely we are obliged to the Divine Protection; in that we find not our preſent State, far more Sad and Calamitous than it is. Many Afflictions we meet with in this World, and ſometimes very Heavy ones: But for *One* Exerciſe of our Patience, we ſhould have a *Thouſand*, and thoſe much more intolerable than we have ever yet felt, did not the good Providence of God continually guard us; were not *The Lord of Hoſts with us*; were not *The God of Jacob our Defence and Refuge:* There are not a few things in all places, which would be both Miſchievous

vous and Deſtructive to us, but for the Care which God Almighty takes of us, by the Miniſtry of His *Angels*, and very many other inviſible Ways. We know, both by Obſervation and Experience, that there is no Creature ſo inconſiderable, as not to be able to make us Miſerable, with the Divine Permiſſion, or to put a Period to our Lives. And therefore that was a good Reply, which *Theodorus* made to *Lyſimachus*, when he threatned to *Kill him*, viz. *What a mighty Matter is that, the moſt contemptible thing is as able to do this as thy ſelf.* The ill *Accidents* to which we are dayly liable, are innumerable; and ſo are the Natural Cauſes, both without us and within us, of a great Number of *Diſeaſes*; ſo that if they were not over-ruled by Providence (and that by ſuch ſecret Means as make it impoſſible for us to underſtand *how*) we could never have one hours freedom from Sickneſs, or Pain; and ſhould be always running into Miſchief.

But if the *Devils* were our onely Enemies,

mies, who are ſtill watching all Advantages againſt both our Souls and Bodies, were it not for the Divine Protection, the Caſe of *both* would be moſt deplorable. St. *Peter* compares the *Head* of them to *A Roaring Lyon*, and ſaith, that *he walketh about ſeeking whom he may devour*. Of theſe malignant Spirits, and their Malevolence to Mankind, the *Pagans* had an Undoubted Tradition, & the poor *Americans* eſpecially need no ſuch Tradition, to whom, to this day, they make themſelves Viſible, and make them feel ſad Effects of their Malice. And we find enough in the Hiſtory of the Goſpel, to incline us to think it very probable, that many of the *Diſeaſes*, and other Evils which happen to *us*, are of *their* Procurement. And there needs no more, but God's ſaying to any one of *them*, concerning any of *us*, what he ſaid of *Job*, *Behold they are in thine hand*, to make this Life a very *hell* to us.

I ſay therefore, how unſpeakably are we obliged to our Good God, for protecting us, as He doth, with His Watch-

Watchful Eye, and Almighty Arm! We have ſeen that He needs not *do* any thing, nor Exert *His* Power in any one *Act*, to make our Being in this World moſt miſerable. He needs, in Order thereto, onely not to continue His Care of us; which the Bad as well as Good, and thoſe who provoke Him every day, ſuch is His Goodneſs and Long-ſuffering, are every Moment protected by; though not *alike* protected; nor the ſame Perſons *alwaies* alike. And how fearful ſhould we be of diſobliging ſuch a Friend, leſt we at length provoke Him to pluck up His *Hedge* of Protection!

Secondly, We come next to ſhew, *What is meant by* Receiving Evil *at the Hand of God*; which *Job*'s Queſtion here ſpeaks to be a moſt neceſſary Duty. ——*Shall we not receive Evil?* This implyeth theſe *Four* Things.

1. *Heartily Acknowledging the Hand of God, to be in the Evils that befal us.*

2. *Sub-*

2. *Submiting Patiently to His Will under them.*

3. *Doing this alſo, Thankfully.*

4. *Complying with God's Great End and Deſign, in them.*

First, *Heartily Acknowledging the Hand, or Providence of God, to be in the Evils which befal us.* Since God's Hand *is*, as hath been ſhewed, in them, we muſt needs be obliged to receive them as from *Him*; and with a great ſenſe of the Truth of that Saying of *Eliphaz*, *Affliction cometh not forth of the Duſt, neither doth Trouble ſpring out of the Ground:* Or it is not to be aſcribed merely to Earthly or Natural Cauſes. And therefore, as we have obſerved, we find Pious Men in Scripture, ſtill owning God's Providence in their Afflictions.

Thoſe conſequently, who look no farther than the *immediate* Cauſes of them, or who look not beyond thoſe which are *Viſible*, cannot behave themſelves like *Religious* Men under them, nor ſcarely like *Men:* But do too often reſemble thoſe ſilly *Currs*, that fly furiouſly upon the Stones

which are flung at them, taking no Notice of the Hand from whence they come.

Thoſe muſt either not believe that God takes care of Men, and deny that there is any ſuch thing as Providence, (which is as bad as flat *Atheiſm*, if it be ever ſeparated from it) who, when, for inſtance, they are viſited with *Sickneſs*, think of no higher Cauſe thereof, than the noxious quality or quantity of what they have eaten or drank, or infectious Steams, or bad Air, or the like; and never conſider, that none of theſe things could hurt them, had not God ſeen it good, not to keep them by ſome Providence or other out of Harms way, or not to Over-rule ſuch Cauſes. And the like may be ſaid of *thoſe*, who, upon the Death of a dear Relative or Friend, are aware of no other Cauſe thereof, than the Nature of the Diſeaſe, or the Weakneſs of the Means which were uſed for the Cure thereof, or ſome ill Accident, *&c.* and it never enters into their thoughts, that this Perſon would have Recovered, had God ſeen

it

it fit to prolong his or her Life: Which if He *had*, more effectual Medicines would have been applyed, or Succeſs given to more ineffectual: Or, in a word, God would then have raiſed up the Patient by ſome Means or other, innumerable of which He hath at His Command; or have done it, if He had pleaſed, *without* Means.

He who ſuffers from the Hand of *Malice*, doth not ſuffer like a Pious Man, who looks not upon His Enemy as God's Rod; who conſiders not, that as much *ill Will* as he hath, he *could have no Power againſt him, except it were given him from Above*; as our Bleſſed Saviour ſaid to *Pilate*. And ſo we might proceed in other Inſtances.

Secondly, Receiving Evils at God's Hand implyeth alſo, *Submiting patiently and quietly to His Will under them.* Patient ſubmiſſion under Afflictions is expreſſed by *Accepting them*, which is the ſame with *Receiving them. If their Uncircumciſed Heart be humbled, and they Accept of*

the Puniſhment of their Iniquity, &c. Lev. 26. 41. *And they ſhall Accept of the Puniſhment of their Iniquity*, v. 43.

We had as good, not to Acknowledge the Hand of God in our Afflictions, as not to ſubmit to His Hand. Nay, in *this* reſpect it is *worſe*, to Murmur and Repine at them, while we acknowledge a Divine Providence in them, than to have no belief hereof, *viz.* That Repining at any thing which we believe *God* hath an Hand in, is *Charging Him fooliſhly*. 'Tis at leaſt, a *Tacit* and *Virtual* Accuſing God Almighty of Injuſtice, or Unkindneſs, or want of Wiſdom.

Impatience under God's Hand muſt neceſſarily proceed from ſome falſe and unworthy Notion of Him; nor can we grudge at any Diſpenſation of His Providence, while we have a Senſe of *this*, That God can do nothing, but what is moſt *fit* to be done. Now it is nothing ſo great a Reflexion upon the Divine Honour, to deny that God concerneth Himſelf in our Sufferings, as, acknowledging it, to think that He can do what is *Unworthy* of Himſelf

Himſelf, and can be Cruel or Unrighteous in any of them: Or can at any time Act unlike to an Abſolutely Perfect Being. Nay *Plutarch* would tell us, that it caſts leſs Diſhonour upon God, to deny His very *Being*, than to conceive ſuch a thing as *this* of Him: For He ſaith, *That he had rather the World ſhould hereafter ſay there was never ſuch a Man as* Plutarch, *than that* Plutarch *was an Unjuſt and Naughty Man.* And I am ſure, every Good Man will be of *his* Mind.

So that there is no Duty more reaſonable, and therefore more indiſpenſable, than *quiet Submiſſion* under the Severeſt of Providences; which doth always imply a Senſe of their being Good, as Severe as they may *ſeem* to be; and no leſs Good *really*, than they are Severe *ſeemingly* and in appearance.

And therefore, where as we have obſerved, that we ſtill find good men *Acknowledging* the Hand of God in their Sufferings, ſo we have them as conſtantly expreſſing their *Submiſſion* thereto.

Job was a moſt Admirable Example of Patience, conſidering what a prodigious Sufferer he was; tho' in the *laſt* of his terrible Tryals, he diſcovered too much weakneſs.

Old *Ely*, when the Prophet *Samuel* had told him the Dreadful Things, which God had threatned againſt his Houſe, immediately expreſſed his *Submiſſion* in theſe Words, *It is the Lord, let Him do what ſeemeth Him good*, 1 Sam. 3. 18.

King *David* under a very ſore Affliction, which he called the *Stroke* and the *Blow of God's Hand*, thus expreſſed *his* Submiſſion; *I was dumb, I opened not my Mouth, becauſe Thou didſt it*, Pſal. 39. 9. And there is another very Remarkable and Affecting Inſtance given by him hereof, when he was not onely forced to flee from *Jeruſalem*, but in Eminent Danger of loſing his Kingdom, by reaſon of the Powerful Conſpiracy of His own *Son* againſt Him. *If*, ſaith He, *I ſhall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again, and ſhew me both the Ark of God and his Habitation: But if*

if He thus ſaith, I have no Delight in thee, Behold here am I, let Him do what ſeemeth good unto Him, 2 Sam. 15. 25, 26.

But as, all things conſidered, never was there ſuch a Sufferer as our Bleſſed *Lord*, ſo never was there a Pattern of *Patience and Submiſſion*, comparable to that which *He* hath ſet us. Never were worſe Words heard from Him, than ſuch as *theſe: If this Cup may not paſs from me, except I drink it, Thy Will be done. Not my Will, but Thy Will be done. The Cup which my Father hath given me to drink, ſhall I not drink it?* And His Example is again and again propoſed to us, as a great Motive to *Patience*, and the reſigning of our ſelves to the Divine Will under all Afflicting Providences, *Let us*, ſaith the Author to the *Hebrews*, *run the Race that is ſet before us with Patience, looking unto Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of our Faith; who, for the joy that was ſet before Him, endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame*, &c. Chap. 12. 1, 2. *For conſider Him, who endured ſuch*

contradiction of Sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearyed and faint in your Minds, ver. 3. *And for as much*, saith the Apostle St. *Peter*, *as Christ hath suffered for us in the Flesh, Arm your selves also with the same Mind*, 1 Epist. 4. 1.

Thirdly, In *Receiving Evil at Gods Hand*, is likewise implyed *Thankful*, as well as Patient *Submission*. It is evident, that *Job* intended *this* too, in saying, *Shall we not receive Evil?* Seeing his *Wifes* upbraiding him with his *Blessing God* in these words, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the Name of the Lord*, did occasion that Reply to her.

Nor are we to think, that *this his Blessing of God*, upon his receiving such Woful Tydings, was *more* than his Duty; as greatly honoured as he hath most deservedly been in all Ages for it: For 'tis as highly Reasonable, that We should receive Evils *thankfully*, as that we should be *Submissive* under them; tho' it is more difficult.

Not that an Affliction as *such* is matter

matter of Thankfulneſs; but it is ſo, Conſidered as deſigned by God for our Good, our greateſt Good; as will hereafter be ſhewed.

Good People find it a very Eaſie thing, to thank God heartily for Afflictions after the Smart of them is over, upon their Experimenting Advantage to their Souls by them: But there is the ſame Reaſon to Thank God for His *deſigning* us Good, that there is for our *actual receiving* it. I have every whit as much reaſon, when I am Sick or in Pain, or when I ſee one ſo who is *dear* to me, or when I have *loſt* ſuch a one; to Praiſe God for intending ſuch Sufferings for my Spiritual Advantage, as I have ſo to do, after I have found this Advantage by them.

No Man can doubt, but that *Job* was Obliged to be Thankful for his Afflictions (as Heavy as they were) *after* he was raiſed to much more Plentiful and Happy Circumſtances by the means of them; and therefore it is Evident that it became him ſo to be, while he continued under the weight

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of them. Because the Notion he had of God assured him, that he Meant great good to him by them; Possibly in *this* World, but Certainly in that to *come*; which is far better.

All Afflictions as *such* are Evils, as *Job* calls them, and therefore it would be Harsh Doctrine to say, that we ought to Bless God for them Considered under that Notion; but it Sounds no more Harshly to say, that we are bound to be heartily Thankful for them, as they are Means of Grace, and Divine Methods for the more and more qualifying us for the Heavenly Happiness, than it doth to tell me, That my *Surgeon* deserves not only Thanks but a Reward too, for the Torment he gives me, as that Torment is designed in order to my *Cure*.

Considering Afflictions under the notion of Medicines for the Curing of our Spiritual Maladies, or as Tryals for the Exercise of our Graces, they are not onely Good, but some of the Best things; but I shall not need to say, that all Good things are matter

matter of Thankſgiving; nor that our Thankfulneſs for them ought to be proportioned to the *degrees* of Goodneſs that are in them.

Fourthly, It is implyed too in *Receiving Evils at Gods Hand*; that we *Chearfully Comply with Gods Ends and Deſigns in inflicting them.*

We now intimated that they are deſigned for Good to us, but the Concurrence of our Endeavours with the Divine Grace, is abſolutely neceſſary to the accompliſhing of Gods good Deſigns upon us. No Means of Grace can ſignify any good to us, without our making uſe of them as *Such.*

We ſaid *but now*, That Patient Submiſſion is Expreſſed by *Accepting the Puniſhment of our iniquities*; and now we add that *Compliance* alſo with the Ends thereof, the Chief of which is our Reformation, was intended by that Form of ſpeech. Nor can we be properly ſaid to *Receive* Evil from God, or to Accept thereof, if we are meerly Paſſive under it; or at leaſt we then *receive it in vain*, as the Apoſtle be-

beſeecheth us not ſo *to receive the Grace of God.*

Not to improve Afflictions to our Spiritual Advantage, ſeeing *this* is the Deſign of them, is to *deſpiſe* them; which *Eliphaz* warned *Job* againſt. *Happy is the man*, ſaith he, *whom God Correcteth, therefore deſpiſe not thou the Chaſtening of the Lord, Job* 5. 17. Which is as much as if he had ſaid, Seeing God doth mean the greateſt Good to Men in Correcting them, be ſure thou ſo improve this His Severe Correction, as not to fruſtrate His End therein. And Excellent was that Advice which *Elihu* gave him, Ch. 34. 31, 32. *Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto God I have born Chaſtiſement, I will not offend any more; That which I ſee not teach Thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.*

Some may think, that we have omitted one Great thing, in Shewing what is implyed in *Receiving Evils at Gods* Hand, and that is Rejoycing and Glorying in them; which is more than being Thankful: For there are

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ſeveral Texts in the *New Teſtament*, which ſpeak *this* likewiſe to be a Duty. As particularly St. *James* ſaith, Ch. 1. 2. *Count it all Joy, when you fall into diverſe Temptations*, or Tryals. St. *Paul* ſaith, *We Glory in Tribulations*, Rom. 5. 3. And *I will rather Glory in mine Infirmities*, 2 Cor. 12. 9. And other paſſages there are to the ſame purpoſe.

But in Anſwer hereunto, ſuch Expreſſions doubtleſs have not reference to thoſe Afflictions, which God layeth upon us in the Ordinary Courſe of His Providence, but to thoſe particularly which Chriſtians meet with, for the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, and for Righteouſneſs Sake; which were the Chief ſufferings of the *Apoſtles*, and the *Primitive* Chriſtians. And the Apoſtle doth plainly intimate, in the words next following thoſe I laſt cited, that *this* ſort of Afflictions were thoſe he there meant, *viz. Therefore I take Pleaſure in Infirmities, in Reproaches, in Neceſſities, in Perſecutions, in Diſtreſſes, for Chriſt's Sake.* Or in Suffering all theſe for *Chriſt's Sake.* And

And those words of our *Saviour* may well lead us, *thus* to understand the forementioned and the like Texts, *viz. Blessed are ye, when Men shall hate you, and when they shall Separate you from their Company, and shall Reproach you, and Cast out your Name as Evil, for the Son of Man's Sake. Rejoyce ye in that day and Leap for joy: For behold your Reward is great in Heaven; For in the like manner did their Fathers unto the Prophets.* Luke 6. 22, 23. And there are *three* Special Reasons, why Afflictions that are Suffered upon *this* account, should be Rejoyced and Gloried in. Namely,

1. Because infinite Honour is done us, when we are called forth to Suffer for the Sake of Christ. Wherefore it is said, *Acts* 5. 41. That *The Apostles departed from the presence of the Council, Rejoycing that they were accounted worthy to Suffer for His Name.*

2. Because such Sufferings have the most Glorious Reward Promised to them. Which you now saw is the Reason,

Reason, which our *Saviour* gives, why such Sufferers should *Leap for joy.*

3. Because a Great Reward doth likewise *accompany* Such Sufferings, *viz.* A mighty Presence of Gods Spirit, whereby the Sufferers are *Strengthned with Might in their inward Man.* And this was the Reason the Apostle gave, why he *would most gladly Glory in his Infirmities*; for it follows, *That the Power of Christ may rest upon me:* And why *he took Pleasure in Reproaches, in Necessities, in Persecutions, in Distresses for Christs Sake*, viz. Because, *When I am Weak then am I Strong.* Or then do I find Great Strength from Above, when my Sufferings do most Exceed my natural Strength. Again, St. *Peter* saith, *If ye be Reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of Glory, and of God, resteth upon you.* So that Glorying in Tribulations, in *such* Tribulations, is, if we make Comparisons, rather a Privilege than a Duty.

As it is a very dangerous thing,

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to make Christianity an *Easier* Religion than Christ hath made it, so is it to make it a *Harder* too: For *this* tends greatly to the Discouraging of men, and the frighting them away from it. But nothing could more incline us to think it an impractical Religion, than to be told that one of its Precepts is, That we must Rejoyce, Triumph and Glory under whatsoever Afflictions we are Exercised with. So that, when I am Tormented with a Disease, when I have lost a most dear Relative or Friend, or see such a one in Misery; When a Great **Publick Blessing** (such a one as That which we are *now* Lamenting) is taken away from us, it is not Enough to submit quietly to the Hand of God, nor to Thank Him for His good and gracious Designs in such sore Tryals, towards those who shall duly improve them, but I must also Rejoyce and Glory in them; or I cannot Suffer like a *Christian:* This in Truth is much too Severe Doctrin. We must needs say of it, what the *Disciples* said

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in another Caſe, *This is an hard ſaying, who can hear it?* If *this* were One of the Duties (as it is not) to which Chriſtianity does oblige us, we could not affirm that there is no ground for this ſaying of *Trypho* the *Jew* to *Juſtin Martyr*, viz. *Thoſe Precepts of yours, which are conteined in the Book which you call the Goſpel, are* Θαυμασὰ ἔτως καὶ μεγάλα, *So Great and Wonderful, that I ſuſpect no Mortal can obſerve them.*

I think it here fit to ſuggeſt *this* alſo, That neither are we obliged to behave our ſelves under Afflictions, as if we had no *Senſe* of Pain. This is to ſuffer like *Stoicks*, not like *Chriſtians*. Afflictions are painful things; *They are not for the preſent* (as the Apoſtle ſaith) *joyous but grievous*; and if they were not *Grievous* they would not be *Afflictions*. And when a man is in pain, to carry it as if he felt nothing, is ſo far from being Brave, or ſo much as Commendable, that it is to play the Hypocrite. Our *Saviour* never taught us ſuch

Doctrin, as not by Precept, ſo neither by His Example; ſince He Himſelf expreſſed a ſharp Senſe of Pain. And ſo Tender was his Nature, that when He ſaw others weep for His dead Friend *Lazarus*, He could not forbear weeping with them, altho' He intended preſently to reſtore him to Life.

And therefore it is ſo far from being Blame-worthy in *Us*, that it becomes us to ſhed tears, and to uſe other Natural Expreſſions of Grief under Afflictions; and as they are greater or leſs, to expreſs more or leſs Senſe of them. Onely we muſt do all that lies in us not to be *immoderate* Mourners: That is, we ought not to give way to ſo great a Dejection of Spirit, as will diſable us for thoſe Duties which an Afflicted State calleth for.

And as to *Weeping*, I would be ſo far from Checking an Afflicted Perſon for it, that I would Encourage him to it, if he *can* weep. For Experience tells us, that Tears give a Vent to Grief, and ſo give ſome

Eaſe.

Eaſe. But yet we may weep too much, for Exceſſive Weeping raiſeth Vapours, and as much diſturbs the Head, as Moderate does relieve the Heart.

And thus much for our Second Head of Diſcourſe: *What is here meant by Receiving Evil at God's Hand?*

Thirdly, We ſhall now ſhew, *How Receiving Good at the Hand of God, is a Motive to Receive Evil:* Or, *wherein lyeth the Force of this Motive.*

The Force thereof lies in theſe *Four* Particulars; which ſingly, and much more Altogether, do make it very Strong and Powerful.

I. *The Evils we Receive at God's Hand, are exceeding* Few *in Compariſon of the Good Things.*

II. *Our Good Things are all* Undeſerved, *even the leaſt of them; but we deſerve incomparably more Evil Things than we meet with in this World, and incomparably Worſe Things.*

III. *We* Need *Evil Things as well as, and* no leſs *than, Good Things.* Which will lead us to ſhew, That,

IV. *Evil things are Ordered and Appointed to us by God, from the ſame* Principle *that Good things are: And therefore the Evil things which come from His Hand are Good, conſidered as coming from thence.*

Firſt, *The Evils which we receive at the Hand of God, are exceeding* Few *in compariſon of the Good things, which are innumerable.* Our Good things are ſo many, that we are dayly loaded with them. *Bleſſed be the Lord,* ſaith the *Pſalmiſt, who dayly loadeth us with His Benefits.* Pſal. 68. 19.

And he *thus* addreſſeth himſelf to God, *Pſal.* 40. 5. *Many, O Lord my God, are Thy Wonderful Works which Thou haſt done, and Thy Thoughts which are to us ward: They cannot be reckoned up in Order unto Thee; if I ſhould declare and ſpeak of them, they are more than can be numbered.*

It is impoſſible for us to draw an *Inventory* of the *Thouſandth* part of thoſe Bleſſings, which in a very ſhort time we all receive from the Bounty of Heaven. Every Minute of our Lives is full of Mercies, nor can we

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ſee any Place, which doth not abound with Effects and Expreſſions of the Divine Benignity: Whether we look upwards or downwards, or round about us, or *within* us, as well as *without* us. And all Conſiderative Perſons are able to make a large Catalogue of more *ſpecial* Favours, from time to time conferred upon them, over and above thoſe which are the Common Portion of their Fellow Creatures.

Nay, as it is certainly beyond the Ability of a *Finite* Underſtanding, to comprehend all the *individual* Bleſſings which every Man is oblig'd to God for; ſo is it too much for an *Humane* Underſtanding to number all the ſeveral *Species* and *Sorts* of them.

We can begin with Meat, Drink and Cloaths, Health and Strength, the Uſe of our Reaſon, and many Bodily and Mental Endowments: And we can proceed to Friends and Relations, to Preventions of Evils *feared*, and Deliverances from Evils *felt*, &c. But when we have gone as far as we can, we can not ſay how

much we have fallen ſhort of filling up the Account; and are fain to content our ſelves at laſt, with ſumming up all in ſuch Generals as *theſe*, Neceſſaries, Conveniences and Superfluities: Things Profitable, Honourable and Pleaſant: Bodily and Spiritual good things; or thoſe which relate to our Well-being in *this* World, and to our *Eternal* Happineſs in the *other*.

Now what an Argument is *this*, to perſwade us to do what we ſhewed is implyed, in *Receiving Evil at God's Hand!* viz. *For now and then a Days Cloudy Weather, I have many Weeks of Sun-ſhine: For a few Weeks Sickneſs, I have many Months, and perhaps Years of Health: Evils fall upon me in thin Drops, but Good things come down in plentiful Showers; Or I have many Thouſands of Good things, for One of Evil.*

This Conſideration muſt needs make us ſenſible, that it is the moſt diſingenuous thing in the World, to forget our Obligations to God for an infinite Number of Good things, by means

means of the *Greateſt* of thoſe (Comparatively ſpeaking) extremely few Evils, from which His Providence does not protect us.

Nay, there is *One* Gift of GOD, which *Alone* will Weigh down all the Temporal Evils that do, or can befal us; Namely, That of *His own Son:* How then are they Out-weighed by *this*, and all the other Fruits of the Divine Mercy and Bounty put together!

Secondly, Another Conſideration that adds much to the force of this Motive, is, That *our Good things are all Undeſerved, even the very leaſt of them: But we deſerve all the Evils we Suffer, and incomparably more and greater, than are inflicted in this Life.* There is no good man, but will readily ſay with *Jacob*, Gen. 32. 10. *I am not Worthy of the leaſt of all the Mercies, and of all the Truth, which Thou haſt ſhewed unto Thy Servant.*

It is impoſſible that ſuch poor Impotent Creatures as *we* are, ſhould be able to do any Service, whereby we can Challenge the leaſt Reward

at the Hands of our Creator, upon the account of Merit.

Indeed the notion of a *Creature* is inconsistent with the least deserving from Him. A Creature owing all that it *is*, and all the Power it hath, to its Maker. It being a perfectly Dependent thing, and Unable to Act or to Subsist one Moment, but by virtue of its dependence upon its First Cause. And therefore the Glorious *Angels* themselves must needs acknowledge, that they are obliged to the Divine Grace for all the Blessings they Enjoy.

And as the notion of a *Creature* Excludeth all Merit in reference to *God*, so doth the notion of a *God*, render it impossible for a Creature to Merit of Him. For that Notion being *Absolute Perfection, and Infinite Self-Sufficiency*, it is impossible to do God a Kindness; and for him to be Beholden to any one. *Can a Man*, saith *Eliphaz*, *be Profitable to God, as he that is Wise may be Profitable unto himself? Is it any Pleasure*, or addition of Happiness, *to the Almighty*,

ty, that thou art Righteous? Or is it Gain to Him, that thou makeſt thy ways Perfect? Job 21. 2, 3. And therefore I ſay, there can be no proper Meriting at *His* Hands.

But on the Contrary, the Evils we receive are all *Deſerved*. We cannot but be Convinced of our ill deſerts, when we Conſider that we are Lapſed and Apoſtate Creatures; and how we have Tranſgreſſed the Eternal Laws of Righteouſneſs, and Affronted the Great Sovereign of the World, by innumerable Acts of Diſobedience. He knows not what *Sin* is; what Horrible Injuſtice is in it; how Intolerably Preſumptuous a thing it is, for Creatures to oppoſe their wills to the Wiſe and Good Will of their Great Creator; nor does he know what Prodigious Ingratitude, nor what Deſperate Madneſs, every Wilful Sin againſt God Implyeth, who is not ſenſible that the Worſt of Evils are deſerved by him.

And whoſoever have a due Senſe of their Sins, will ſay whilſt under the

the Heavieſt Calamities with *Nehemiah*, in the Name of the Rebellious *Iſraelites*, *How be it, Thou Lord art juſt in all that is come upon us, for Thou haſt done Right, but we have done wickedly*, Ch. 9. 33. And with *Ezra*, *Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our Iniquities deſerve*, Chap. 9. 13.

And as in the General, all Kinds of Evils are deſerved by us, as we have been more or leſs Guilty of Wilful ſinning, ſo whatſoever particular Evils we at any time fall under, we are, I doubt, (ordinarily at leaſt) Conſcious to our ſelves of having more eſpecially deſerved each of them, by ſuch and ſuch Particular Sins. Who, for inſtance, when he is caſt upon a Bed of Sickneſs, is not ſenſible that he deſerveth to be deprived of his *Health*, by having too much abuſed it while he enjoyed it; or by having been too unthankful for it? *who* when he hath loſt a Dear *Relative*, doth not, or ought not, to Reflect upon his having over-loved him, or not having had a due value for the Bleſſing he had

had in him; or not having discharged his duty towards him, *&c.* Again, where is that Man to be found, who, when he has Sustained a great Loss in his *Estate*, is not compelled by his Conscience to acknowledge that this is very just upon him, for his having made it Serviceable to some Lust or other, or his having made an *Idol* of it, and Preferred it before *God*; or for doing too little *good* with it, or for minding the great Concerns of his Soul and the other Life, the *Less* for it? *Who*, when he is wronged in his *Good-Name*, can say he deserves not to suffer in this kind from the Providence of God, either for having so wronged *Others*; or for not being so tender as he ought to have been of their Reputation; or for having been too forward, to take up Reports against men, without good Evidence; or over-valuing his own Credit, and Priding himself therein; or for not having Endeavoured as he ought, to promote the interest of *Religion* thereby; nor Imployed it to those good Ends and Purposes, upon the ac-

account of which a good Name in the World is chiefly desirable?

Now what Stronger Arguing can there be than *this?* Do we receive good things in so great an Abundance, from the Hand of God, when our Merits could not Claim the very *least* of them; and is it then Reasonable that we should think *much* of receiving Evil things also from the same Hand; when our Hearts Accuse us of having *deserved* every one of them, and much greater Evils too, than have ever befallen us?

I will bear, saith the Prophet, *the Indignation of the Lord, because I have Sinned against Him*, Micah Ch. 7. 9.

Thirdly, It adds still *more* Force and Strength to this Motive, to Consider, That *We* need *Evil things as well as Good, and no less than Good things.* Afflictions are needful for all *Sorts* of People: For the Bad; for the more Imperfectly Good, and even for the very Best.

I. They are Needful, and most *Necessary*, for *Bad* People. For those *who live without God in the World*; who

who make none, or but little Conſcience of their Ways; who live in great Forgetfulneſs of their being Subject to Gods Sovereign Authority, of their Continual Dependance upon Him, both for their Well-being and their Continuance in Being, and of their Unſpeakable Obligations to Him; *Who are alienated from the Life of God*, and wholly addicted to the Animal and Senſual Life, and Mindleſs of the Concerns of their Immortal Souls.

Afflictions are ſo neceſſary for ſuch as *theſe*, that no other Means are like to be Effectual to their Converſion, *to the Opening of their Eyes, and the turning them from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan to God*, Except they are inforced by them.

Afflictions are in their *own nature* apt to make men *Serious*, and to put Vain People upon *Conſidering*, as well as by their being *backed* with the *Divine Grace*. They are moſt Proper Means to this End, as they *force* Sinners to retire from their Naughty Companions, and from their Sports and

and Paſtimes (eſpecially if they are very Smarting and Painful) and from all their *Secular* Employments too, by ſetting their hearts on which, they are continually diverted from concerning themſelves in the Affairs of Religion and the other World; and as they render all Carnal and Worldly Delights and Pleaſures unſavoury to them. Afflictions do alſo naturally Excite men to *Call upon God*, eſpecially when they are ſenſible that *He alone* is able to Help them; and Awaken their Conſciences, and make them Reflect upon their many Miſcarriages, as having Provoked Him to inflict them. And they as naturally put them upon making Strong Reſolutions to amend their Lives for the Atoning of His diſpleaſure.

Thus the Woman of *Zarephath*, upon the ſuddain death of her Child, Cryed out to the Prophet, *Art thou come unto me to call my Sin to remembrance, and to Slay my Son?* 1 Kings 17. 18.

And thus *Joſephs* Brethren, upon the

the Severity he uſed towards them, *Said one to another, we are verily Guilty Concerning our Brother; in that we ſaw the Anguiſh of his Soul when he beſought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this diſtreſs come upon us.* Gen. 42. 21.

God ſaith, *Hoſea* 5.15. *I will go and return to my Place*, or I will withdraw my Protection from them, *till they acknowledge their Offence, and ſeek my Face: In their Affliction they will ſeek me Early.*

And it is ſaid, *Pſal.* 78. 34. *when He Slew them, then they Sought Him, and they Returned and Enquired after God. And they Remembred that God was their Rock, and the High God their Redeemer.* Or, *then* they called *this* to mind, who till they were Afflicted, could never be perſwaded to Conſider it.

As Stubborn a Wretch as *Pharoah* was, his Hard heart was quickly from time to time Softned by the *Plagues*, and it reteined its Softneſs under *each Plague*, till it was removed.

When the *Prodigal Son* was brought to

to extream Penury, he ſoon *came to himſelf* and Returned to his Father.

King *Manaſſeh* was a Prodigy of Wickedneſs, yet *When he was in Affliction* (as the Text ſaith) *he beſought the Lord his God, and Humbled himſelf greatly before the God of his Fathers. And Prayed unto Him, and He was intreated of him*, &c. *Then* Manaſſeh *knew that the Lord He is God.* Or he had a *Powerful Senſe* thereof upon his Mind, 2 *Chron.* 33. 12, 13.

Afflictions are ſo neceſſary to the Converſion of Sinners, that thoſe who have ſpent many years in a Looſe Sort of Life, are very rarely Effectually Reclaimed otherways, than by Gods Bleſſing upon ſome Sharp Affliction.

II. Evil things, or Afflictions, are very Needful and Neceſſary for *Imperfectly Good*, as well as for Bad People. They greatly need them, in order to their *Growing in Grace*, and riſing to higher degrees of Goodneſs.

Particularly, in order to their being more Watchful againſt Temptations to Sin. This Experience King *David*

David had of the Benefit of Afflictions. *Before I was Afflicted*, ſaith he, *I went Aſtray, but now have I kept thy Word.* Pſal. 119. 67.

In order to the more weaning them from this Vain World, and the Mortifying of all Remainders of Senſuality.

In order to the more Humbling them, under a Senſe of their Frailty and Impotence, and their more cloſe dependence upon God.

In order to the more Softning of their Hearts, and more opening their Bowels of Compaſſion towards *others* in Affliction. None have ſuch a ſympathy with their Suffering Brethren, as thoſe who are made ſenſible of the Sadneſs of their Condition, by their own Feeling.

In order to their more loving of God, and Truſting in Him. To which the Experience they have had of Divine Supports under Afflictions, and Deliverances out of them, doth greatly Contribute.

In ſhort, by Afflictions *The Iniquity of* Jacob *is purged, and this is*

all the Fruit, to take away his Sin. Isaiah 22. 14.

III. Evil things are needful too even for the Eminently Good. And that, as upon *some* of the forementioned Accounts, so more Especially,

1. For Prevention. For which End the most Healthy Persons do sometimes take Physick. St *Paul*, as Eminent a Saint as he was, had a *Messenger of Satan sent to Buffet him, lest he should be Exalted above measure, through the Abundance of his Revelations*, as he tells us, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7.

There are none so Good as to be out of *all* danger, while they remain in this World; as to be able to bear long and uninterrupted Prosperity, without being lyable to be the worse for it in several respects.

Who is so Humble, who so Heavenly minded, as to have no Reason to fear his being too much Opiniated of himself, and loving the world too much, if God did not sometimes mind him what an infirm and weak Creature he is, by Afflictions of one

kind

kind or other, and never imbittered his Comforts to him?

2. The Best People need them likewise, for the Tryal and Exercise of some Graces and Virtues, which cannot be exerted without them. What Exercise can there be of the Grace of *Contentment*, while all things succeed according to a man's desire and expectation? Of *Patience*, while he feels no pain? Of Submission to *God's* Will, while God never Crosseth his *Own* Will? Of *Meekness* and *Forgiveness of Enemies*, while he hath no Enemies to forgive, or meets with no Provocations from them? And this leads me to Add,

3. That the Best do need Afflictions, in Order to their doing so much the more Credit to Religion, and the more benefiting the World by their Examples. For we have now seen, that they cannot be Examples of *all* Virtues without them.

4. The Best need them also, to make them so much the more to Value, and consequently to be the more Thankful for, the Good things they

enjoy. There is no Man so good, but he prizeth Health the more, for being some times Sick. No man can be so affected with his Obligations to God for any Blessing, who never was without it, as *he* who hath *felt* how uneasie and grievous a thing it is to *want* it.

Nay, were there no Life after *this*, we should think *tolerable* Evils necessary to give the better *Gusto*, & a more pleasing Relish to the Gratifications of our *Senses*. The more Hungry or Thirsty a Man is, the greater is the Pleasure he takes in Eating or Drinking. How pleasant is a Bed or Couch to a Man tyred with hard Labour; a cool Shade to one parched with Heat; Liberty after Confinement; the Enjoyment of a dear Relation or Friend, after a long Absence; and even *Indolence* or mere *Ease*, after great Pain! As *Socrates* observed, in his last Discourse with his Friends, after he was rid of his *Shackles*.

And perhaps there are not many Evils, which we are able to bear with any patience, and that continue not over-

over-long, which do not make us a good Recompence, by the much more pleasant Enjoyment we have of the Opposite Good things, upon their Leaving us.

Fourthly, The last Consideration I named, which gives great Weight to the Motive in the Text, *To Receive Evil things at the Hand of God*, is, *That they are Ordered and Appointed to us by God, from the Self-same Principle that Good things are*, viz. *That of Good Will.* And therefore, as was said, the Evils which come from Him are Good, *as* they come from Him.

There is an Excellent Saying to this Purpose of an *Heathen* Philosopher, *viz*: * *Simplicius, We do not say that the Divine Justice is the Cause of Evil, but of Good; because the Evil which proceeds from thence, is in order to Good.*

* In *Epictet.* Enchirid. c. 34. p. 167

We have seen that all sorts of Men do *need* Evil things, as well as Good; and we are now to shew, that God inflicts them, *because* we need them.

We have shewed, That they are

Spiritual *Physick*, for the Cure of the Maladies of our Souls; and we find that for *this* Reason God sends them, in *Hebr.* 12. 9, 10. The Apostle tells us in some of the foregoing Verses, That in the *general*, Gods End in his Chastizements is *good*; that *Good-will* is the Principle from whence they proceed; and in *these* he shews *particularly*, that God designs our *Spiritual* Advantage by them. *Furthermore*, saith he, *we have had Fathers of our Flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much more be in Subjection to the Father of Spirits, and Live? For they verily for a few days chastened us, after their own pleasure; but He for our Profit, that we might be Partakers of His Holiness.*

We have shewn, That Afflictions are needful, not onely for Correction, in Order to our Amendment, but, for Tryal too; and we read that this End also *God* hath in them, 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7. — *Now for a Season (if need be) ye are in Heavinesse through manifold Temptations: That the Tryal of your*

your Faith being much more precious than that of Gold which perisheth, tho' it be tryed with Fire (or, it being of much more Advantage to your Faith, than the Tryal of Gold is to Gold, because it will *wear out*, tho' it can bear the trial of Fire) *might be found unto Praise, & Honour, & Glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.* And 1 Pet. 4. 12. *Think it not strange concerning the Fiery Tryal, which is to Try you, &c.* or, is designed by *God* for this purpose.

God is alike good in the Evils He inflicts, & the Good things he confers upon us; as the *Physitian* hath the *same* Good design towards his Patient, in his Griping Physick and Comforting Cordials: He equally aims at the Recovery of his Health, in making him Uneasy with the *One*, and Chearing his Spirits with the *Other*.

And therefore Considering this *Last* with the *foregoing* Particulars; nay, tho' there were no *other* but this to be considered, *well* might *Job* say, *Shall we receive Good at the Hand of God, and shall we not receive Evil?* And infi-

nite reaſon have we, not only to be Patient under Evil things, but to be Thankful for them too; ſeeing they are not ſo Evil Conſidered in *themſelves*, as they are Good Conſidering their *Deſign*; ſeeing, if we will Comply therewith, they are not more painful than they are profitable, nor ſo Injurious to our *Outward* Man, as Beneficial to our *Inward*.

I will Conclude *this* Argument with the Words of another of the Philoſophers, *viz.* * *Epictetus* in *Arrian*; *O Man, what doſt thou? Why doſt thou not rid thy ſelf of all this Trouble? Adventure at laſt, with eyes lifted up to God, to ſay unto Him; Uſe me, O God, for the future at Thine own Pleaſure, Thou haſt my freeſt Conſent. I am of the ſame Mind that Thou art, I have a Mind to nothing but what Thou thinkeſt Good. Lead me whither Thou wilt, Cloath me as Thou pleaſeſt. Wilt Thou have me bear an Office, or ſhall I live a private Life? Muſt I ſtay, or muſt I fly? Shall I be Poor, or ſhall I be Rich? I am ready to Obey, I will defend Thee againſt all the World. I will*

* Comment. in *Epict.* l. 2. c. 6. p. 117.

will make an Apology for Thy Providence about theſe things to every Body. I ſay that all is Good, becauſe Thou art ſo. What could he have ſaid better, had he been a *Chriſtian?*

But to prevent Miſtakes, I deſire it may be obſerved, that I have not ſaid that in *whatſoever* Evils men may Suffer, God aimeth at the benefit and advantage of the *Sufferers*; for had I affirmed *this* I could not have juſtified it: There being *ſome* Evils which we have cauſe to look upon as wholly *Judgments*, and as proceeding from mere Vengeance, in reference to thoſe on whom they are inflicted. As when a Notoriouſly wicked Wretch is Cut off in the very Act of ſome Horrible Wickedneſs. Inſtances of this kind are not only to be found in the *Sacred* Records, but our *Own* Age hath produced *ſuch*, and Poſſibly *no* Age hath been without them. And when provoking Sinners are taken away in their Sins, without any Previous Warning. But it is notwithſtanding moſt true, that God Almighty's Deſign is *Good* in *all* Evils; for when

when He means not the Good of the *Sufferers*, He intends a more General and Publick Good: That all Spectators of such Judgments, and those to whom the Notice of them shall come, may be Scared by them from those Impious Practises which drew them down.

But I will add, That those have not the least reason to fear, that Evil things of any nature whatsoever, have fallen upon them in *mere Judgment*, who do not feel themselves given up to *Hardness of heart*; by which Phrase we are to understand *Perverseness of Will*, or to a *Reprobate Sense*; but find that their Afflictions have a good influence upon their Minds; that they make them more Serious, and Excite in them good Inclinations, and Awaken them to Consider *the things which belong to their Peace*, and Eternal Happiness.

Fourthly, We are now come to the *Inferences*, which are to be drawn from the Doctrine we have delivered.

First,

First, I Infer from thence, *how* we are to Pray Againſt Afflictions, *viz.* Not Abſolutely, but *Conditionally*, and with intire Submiſſion.

That it is Lawful to deprecate them, we are well aſſured, in that we find not only the beſt Men ſo doing in H. Scripture, but alſo our Bleſſed *Saviour* Himſelf. He did ſo, *John* 12. 27. *Now is my Soul troubled, and what ſhall I ſay? Father Save me from this Hour.* And He doth the like, *Matth.* 26. 39. *O my Father, if it be Poſſible, let this Cup paſs from me.*

But we have alſo His Example, for Praying againſt the Bitter Cup *Conditionally*, and with Submiſſion to the Will of His Father. This is Implyed in thoſe words, *if it be poſſible*: That is, to give it in the words of *Grotius*, *if it be Conſiſtent with Thy Decrees, that by any other Means Thy Glory, and the Salvation of Mankind, may be Equally Provided for.* And this Condition, we have in the Expreſſeſt terms in the latter part of that Verſe, *Nevertheleſs not as I will but as Thou wilt.* Again, V. 42. *O*

my

my Father, if this Cup may not pass away Except I drink it, Thy Will be done. And V. 44. it is said, *He went away and Prayed the third time, Saying the same words.*

And the same Submission is Implyed in the Text first cited; For after our Lord had said, *Father Save me from this Hour*, and so expressed His *Natural* Aversion thereunto, it follows, *But for this Cause came I unto this Hour.* Which is as much as to say, *But being assured that it is Thy Pleasure that I must undergo this terrible Death, I heartily Submit.* But there are others who read these words, *Father Save me from this Hour*, with an Interrogation Point, & so they conceive Him *thus* to speak, *What shall I say? Shall I say, Father Save me from this Hour? No I will not, as well knowing that Thou hast determined otherwise.*

And it is evident, that no Temporal Evils are to be prayed against *otherwise*, in that Afflictions of one sort or other, are such things, as hath been shewed, as we have Need of upon

on ſeveral Accounts; and there is no particular Affliction but it is better for us to undergo it, than to be without it, for ought we know. We are therefore to refer our ſelves to the Unerring Wiſdom of God, who knows in all Circumſtances what is beſt for *us*, and beſt in *it ſelf*, after we have prayed Him to keep off ſuch an Affliction, or to remove it.

It becomes us conſequently not to Beg *either*, Over-paſſionately and Vehemently: For *this* would be to *preſcribe* to God, and to tell *Him* what is *beſt*. Thoſe do no *leſs* than ſo, who pray for Health or any outward Bleſſing for *themſelves* or *theirs*, as if they would have *no Nay*. Inſtead of ſo doing, we ought heartily to endeavour to bring our Minds to a full Acquieſcence in the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs; and to a Willingneſs to bear ſuch or ſuch an Affliction (with the Divine Aſſiſtance) if God ſees it *fit* we ſhould; as knowing that what *He ſeeth* fit, muſt neceſſarily *be* ſo, and that it is Madneſs to be averſe to what *is* ſo.

And

And by this means ſhall we be able to ſay that our Petitions are never denyed. I mean, when we pray with Submiſſion, and deſire Abſolutely nothing but what is *beſt* for us, or rather what is beſt *in it ſelf*, which alſo will prove to be beſt for *us*, when we are once brought to this happy Temper.

It is ſaid by the Author to the *Hebrews*, That our Saviour *was heard in that he feared.* How was he heard, ſince the bitter Cup of death did *not* paſs from him, but he did drink it? Why, he was heard, as in *other* reſpects ſo in *this*, that he Prayed againſt that Curſed death, not Abſolutely but Conditionally. And therefore he Prayed *for* it upon ſuppoſition that it was moſt agreeable to the Wiſe and Good Will of God that he ſhould Suffer it: For we have ſeen that he ſaid, *Not as I will but as Thou wilt.*

Arrian. l. 2. P. 186. To this purpoſe, I will preſent you with other moſt Excellent ſayings of the laſt Cited Philoſopher. *Let us begin every thing without too Paſſionate*

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a deſire, or an Over-great averſneſs. Let us behave our ſelves like a Traveller, who when he comes where two Ways meet, asks the firſt paſſenger which of them he ſhall take to ſuch a Place; having no inclination to the Right hand, rather than to the Left: But deſiring onely to underſtand the ready way to his Journeys End. Juſt ſo muſt we go to God, as to our Guide; as to One who ought to diſpoſe of us as He Pleaſeth. We muſt not direct Him, what Courſe to take with us, but embrace that which He Propoſeth, and deſire only that He will Conduct us in the direct way to Happineſs. This is our Duty and our Safety: Whereas now you ſhall ſee Men runing to Him; Saying, Lord have Mercy upon me, Deliver me from ſuch or ſuch an Evil! Wretch that thou art, wouldſt thou have any thing but what is Beſt; and who can tell what that is? Is there any thing Beſt, but what ſhall ſeem ſo to God? Why doſt thou endeavour to Corrupt Him, who is thy Judge, and to Seduce Him who is thy Councellor, and to move Him by thy Cries to do otherwiſe than He thinks fitting? Suffer

fer Him therefore to follow His own Wiſdom, &c.

What Admirable Diſcourſe is *this!* 'Tis moſt worthy of the higheſt rank of *Chriſtians*. But yet it is not very Strange, that it ſhould come from the Pen of a Conſiderative Religious *Pagan*; it being perfectly agreeable to Right Reaſon, and neceſſarily to be inferred from a true Notion of God, which very many of *Them* had.

And Conſequently what a Shame muſt it needs be to us *Chriſtians*, not heartily to Endeavour to get our Minds into this Frame.

But it is a very Melancholy thing to conſider, that it ſhould be ſo Extreamly difficult, as we generally find it is, ſo to maſter our Paſſions under great Afflictions, as to bring our ſelves to an intire Acquieſcence in the good Pleaſure of God; while we cannot but Acknowledge it to be the moſt Unreaſonable thing imaginable, *not* to reſt well Satisfied therewith. And that it ſhould be even next to *impoſſible*, without an Extraordinary meaſure of the

the Divine Grace, to make our Minds *Eaſie* under *Such* Afflictions (and eſpecially for thoſe who are of Unhappy Bodily Tempers, be they never ſo good Chriſtians) but by the help of Time, which without the help of *Reaſon*, will much deaden the ſenſe of any Affliction.

And therefore it is *alike* difficult not to Pray againſt ſuch Evils, as we are Naturally inclined moſt to dread, *over Vehemently*, and with leſs Submiſſion than becomes us.

But God is ſo Good, as to conſider our Frame, and to make Abatements for our natural infirmities, ſo long as we do not give our ſelves leave to *Repine* and *Murmur* at any of His Providences.

One of the Philoſophers, I think *Epictetus*, adviſeth never to Pray to God, for any External Bleſſings in *Particular*, but only that he would do for us in the general what is Beſt. And ſuch a Sence may be put upon *One* or *Two* of the laſt recited Sayings, tho' they do not *neceſſarily* imply it. But he was ſo careful to avoid *One*

Extreme, as to run into *Another*, tho' the safer of the Two. For we are sufficiently warranted by the *H. Scriptures* (and therefore *that* Extreme was very pardonable in those who were unacquainted with them) to ask for particular Outward Blessings; tho with great Care to do it with Resignation to the Wise Will of God.

And it is very wonderful to see, how *Epictetus* could *himself take* that forementioned Advice, which he gave to *Others*, in this following Address he made to the Supreme Deity, *viz. Did I ever find fault with Thy Government? I was Sick when Thou wouldst have me to be so, and so are Others, but I was willingly Sick. I was always Poor at Thy Appointment, but Rejoycing. I never was a Magistrate, nor had any Dignity, because Thou wouldest not have me, and I never desired it. Didst Thou ever see me the more out of Humour, or Cast down for this? Have I ever appeared before Thee with a discontented Countenance? Was I not always prepared and ready for whatsoever Thou Requi-*

redst?

redſt? Wilt Thou have me depart out of this Feſtival Solemnity, I am ready to go; and I give Thee all Thanks for having Honoured me ſo far, as to give me leave to keep the Feaſt with Thee, and Behold Thy Works, and Obſerve Thy Government of the World. Let Death ſeize on me no otherwiſe employed, than thus thinking and writing of ſuch things.

And he *thus* Appealed to his Acquaintants, *Behold I am an Exile, without Houſe, without Servants, I lye upon the Ground, I have no Wife, no Children*, &c. *But when did you ever hear me Accuſe either God or Man? When did I ever Complain of any one? Have ever any one of you ſeen me with a Sad Countenance?* O how few Chriſtians can forbear Bluſhing at the reading of *theſe* Paſſages!

Arrian. Epict. l. 3. C. 22. P. 314.

And what hath been ſaid of Private and Perſonal Evils, is as true of Publick and National. *Theſe* neither are to be deprecated Abſolutely; for they are deſigned no leſs for the good of Nations and Bodies Politick, than

the *other* are for the good of particular Persons. *When Thy Judgements are abroad in the World, the Inhabitants thereof will learn Righteousness*, saith the Prophet, *Isaiah* 26. 9. And that for *this* end they are inflicted we are abundantly assured. No Calamity short of utter Destruction, ought otherwise to be interpreted, than as designed for the Reformation of those Kingdoms, Cities, and other Societies on which they fall.

And God hath Threatned it as an high Expression of His displeasure, that He will not Punish a Wicked People; nor certainly can there be an *higher* on this side *Hell*. As *Hosea* 4. 14. *I will not Punish your Daughters when they commit Whoredom; nor your Spouses, when they commit Adultery.* And *Ver.* 17. *Ephraim is joyned to Idols, let him alone.* And nothing more Severe could well come out of the Mouth of God Almighty, than those words, *Isaiah* 1. 5. *Why should you be Smitten any more? You will Revolt more and more.*

And therefore, I say, in our intercessions

ceſſions for the diverting or removing of General Judgments, we muſt beware of preſcribing to *God:* In Praying for which, without any Conditions Expreſſed or Implyed, we make our ſelves Wiſer than infinite Wiſdom. And in ſo doing, we may Curſe our Selves and our Country, when we think we Pray for both.

We do now ſeem *generally* impatiently deſirous to have a Concluſion put to this Bloody and *Expenſive War*; but yet we may not Pray Abſolutely for it, becauſe we are far from knowing that it will prove *beſt* for us to have our Prayers granted. Nay *indeed* we have tóo great reaſon to fear it will not, ſince this heavy Scourg hath wrought no viſible Reformation upon us: And that the Conſequence of a *Peace*, and of the total Removal of our Fears from *Abroad*, may be an Occaſion (Conſidering how many Unquiet and Reſtleſs Spirits we have among us) of running us into Confuſion at *Home:* Which is not much leſs dreadful to think of, than falling into the Clutches of our *Com-*

mon Enemy; and which (without a Miraculous interposition of Providence, which it would be Madness to expect) must inevitably make us a Prey to his Teeth; and fasten for ever, at least for *this* Age, our Chains upon us. But if *this* should not be the Effect of a *Peace* before we more deserve it, and are better Prepared for it, God hath Plagues enough for a People *who hate to be Reformed*, which may make them as Miserable as any *War* can do. And so we pass to our *Second Inference*.

Secondly, We learn from what hath been discoursed, how great a Folly it is for a man to Judge *himself* or others to be *out* of Gods Favour, because much Afflicted. If Afflictions were in *all respects* Evils, this ought to be Concluded. But it hath been shewed that, as they come from *God's* Hand, they are good things: That there is not only a Good Design in them but the Best of Designs; and that they are things apt *in their own nature*, to promote our greatest Good.

Those

Thoſe look no farther than the Pain and Smart of an Affliction, that Conclude it an Expreſſion of God's *Ill-Will*. They fix their Eye only upon the *dark* ſide of the Cloud, and take no notice of the *bright* ſide. They are People of very little Thought, and Conſideration; otherwiſe they would eaſily call to mind, that nothing is more common among *our ſelves*, than Correcting and Chaſtiſing from a principle of Love, and of the *greateſt* Love: Than putting to Pain from the greateſt *Good-Will*, and for the moſt Charitable Purpoſes.

They would alſo, if they uſed themſelves to Thinking, Conſider that nothing makes People ſo Serious, or ſo brings them to their right minds, as Afflictions. And they could not (if well acquainted with the *Bible*) but think of ſuch Texts as *theſe: Whom the Lord loveth he Correcteth, as a Father the Son in whom he delighteth*, Prov. 3. 12. *Happy is the man whom God Correcteth*, Job. 5. 17. *Whom the Lord loveth He Chaſteneth, and Scourgeth every Son whom He receiveth*, Heb. 12. 6, 7.

If it be Replyed, That tho' every Affliction is no ſign of a perſons being out of the Favour of God, yet being exerciſed with frequent, long and ſharp Afflictions, ſeems not conſiſtent with His Love: Thoſe who make *This* Reply, need only to be minded, of the Calamities which fell on *Job*; who being declared by God Himſelf to be an Upright, & moſt Exemplarily Good Man, could not but be His Extraordinary Favourite: Or of the Terrible Afflictions with which King *David*, tho' a Man *after God's own Heart*, and the Prophet *Jeremiah*, and many other of the Beſt Men in the *Old* Teſtament, were exerciſed: And thoſe of the Great St. *Paul* and others, which we read of in the *New*.

Nay, thoſe who think there are ſuch Temporal Evils, as cannot conſiſt with the Love of God, muſt believe that His Onely Begotten Son, was an Object of His Hatred.

But God's Hatred is ſo far from being to be concluded from any Evils that *here* befal us, that we cannot certainly conclude ſo much as His

Anger

Anger from *any whatſoever*, without taking in *other* Conſiderations, beſides that of the *Nature* of thoſe Evils. For we have ſeen that they come from God's Hand, for diverſe other Ends beſides *that* of Puniſhing for Sin. And this may be ſaid even of the *greateſt* that are of a mere Temporal Nature. For we do not find, that there was any thing of Puniſhment in *Job*'s Calamities; and we are certain there was nothing of it in our *Saviour*'s Sufferings. That is, they could not be inflicted upon the Account of any Diſpleaſure *He* had given to His Heavenly Father, becauſe in *Him was no Sin.*

And conſidering what hath been ſaid upon this Subject, it would be no unaccountable thing, if none were ever ſo Afflicted as God's Children. No nor if His *deareſt* Children, that is the *beſt* CHRISTIANS, and thoſe who have arrived to the higheſt degrees of Virtue and Goodneſs, ſhould be always *moſt* Afflicted of *any* of His Children. This would be no perplexing Providence, becauſe

ſuch

ſuch would make the beſt Examples to the World of bearing Afflictions, of Patience, chearful and thankful Submiſſion to the Will of God under them.

Nor would they judge themſelves upon a little ſedate thinking, *hardly* dealt with, if the *better Chriſtians* they are, the *more* they ſhould be Afflicted, becauſe *they look not at the things that are ſeen*, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, *but at the things that are not ſeen: The things that are ſeen being Temporal, but the things that are not ſeen, Eternal.* They know that they ſhall have an Abundant Recompence made them *hereafter*, for all their Sufferings *here: That they are not worthy*, as the ſame Apoſtle ſaith, *to be compared with the Glory, which ſhall be revealed in them:* That the extraordinarineſs of their Afflictions for a ſhort time, ſhall (through the Merits of their Saviour) procure to them an extraordinary degree of Heavenly Bliſs to all Eternity.

And they find alſo, eſpecially if their Sufferings be for Righteouſneſs

ſake,

ſake, ſupports at *preſent* ſuitable to their Burdens; and that *as their Sufferings* abound, their Conſolations abound likewiſe.

And thus we ſee what a weak thing it is, to have the worſe Opinion of our Spiritual Eſtate, or to conclude our ſelves out of the Divine Favour, upon the Account of our being much afflicted: And how Unchriſtian a thing it is, to paſs, like *Job*'s Friends, ſevere Cenſures on *others* upon the like Accounts.

"I could Name one of the moſt "Eminent Perſons, and *Chriſtians* too, "of the Age he lived in, who was ſo "far from looking upon great Affli-"ctions, as a Sign of God's Hatred, "or Diſpleaſure, that one Day read-"ing the 12th. to the *Hebrews*, where "it is ſaid, *If ye be without Chaſtiſe-"ment, whereof all are Partakers, then "are ye Baſtards and not Sons*, &c. fell "into a deep Melancholy concern-"ing his own ſtate, becauſe he did "not *then* remember, that he had e-"ver had any very Remarkable Af-"fliction. Which being obſerved by

"a

" a Friend of his, he humbly desired to " know of him the Cause of the great " pensiveness he discerned in his Coun- " tenance. And having his Request " satisfied, he Replyed, That he won- " dred his Memory should so fail him, " since he was fallen (through the " Iniquity of the Times) from most " plentiful to low Circumstances. The " Good Man not acknowledging *this* " to be any great Affliction, because " God had still taken such Care of " him as that he never wanted, his " Friend minded him of a Great One " *indeed*, (which it is much he should " at any time forget) which gave " ease to his Mind. But this Great Man was herein guilty of the *Other* Extreme, not considering those words of K. *Solomon*, *No man knoweth Love or Hatred by all that is before him.*

As for the foresaid Words of the Author to the *Hebrews*, and *that* saying of St. *Paul*, *we must through much Tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God:* And that other, *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution*, they had doubtless a *special*

cial relation to *that* Time when they were ſpoken. When a Man could not make Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and adhere thereto, but he muſt expect to ſuffer greatly for it. Tho' the World was never *yet* I doubt ſo good, as that there hath been a Time when *this* could not be truly ſaid, *The greater Conſcience Men make of their ways, and the more ſtrictly they keep to the Rules of Righteouſneſs and Goodneſs, the more Trouble they muſt make Account of:* Eſpecially when it relates to Perſons in publick Stations. Tho' it muſt be acknowledged too, that *theſe* Mens Troubles are not to be compared with thoſe, in which the bold Tranſgreſſors of thoſe Rules are, in a well Governed Nation, frequently involved.

In ſhort, We are to judge of *our own* Spiritual Eſtate, by conſidering how it is *within* us, not *without* us. And we are to judge of *Others*, as to *that* State, by their Lives and Manners, not by their Outward Circumſtances. This Rule our Bleſſed *Lord* hath taught us, in the Beginning

ning of the *Thirteenth* Chapter of St. *Luke*'s Gospel.

Thirdly, I Infer from what hath been said upon this Subject, That it is a part of great Wisdom, to be, when we are in the most *easie* Circumstances, often thinking of a Change, and preparing our selves for New Afflictions. This will be a means to make them much *easier* to be born when they come; and may be a means to *prevent* their coming, because by thus doing we must needs have so much the less *Need* of them. But the more we *need* one Affliction or other, the more reason have we to *expect* it, from the Consideration even of the Divine *Goodness*.

And Good People should make the less Account of any Long Uninterrupted Prosperity in this World, because they have not their *Portion* here, as the Wicked have. And it is very unreasonable for those to presume upon a kind of Heaven *here*, who upon the best Grounds do hope for a Heaven *hereafter*; and to conclude

clude on paſſing through Temporal Pleaſures to Eternal Ones.

We ought in all reaſon, if we think Heaven our Home, to be very well ſatisfied, to live on *Earth* like *Pilgrims and Strangers*. As the Apoſtle ſaith the Good *Patriarchs Confeſſed* themſelves to be, *Heb.* 11. 13.

If we look upon Heaven as our Everlaſting Reſt, how can we ſo much as *hope*, that our Condition *here* will be better than that of *Travellers*? Who uſe to make full Account of a deal of Rugged and Foul, as well as Smooth and Clean Way; Who expect not to have Dry and Serene Weather always, nor ſcarcely for the *moſt* part; who are not at all ſurprized at Rain, Wind and Storms, as *if ſome ſtrange thing happened to them.* Nor do they think themſelves Unhappy, if they meet with more Scorching Heat, than Cool Shade; or with more Uncivil than Kind and Courteous Uſage in a Strange Country, ſo long as they hope to get ſafe to their Journeys End; and know that they ſhall find all things *there* moſt agreeable

able to their desires, and to their hearts Content.

Good Christians need not be minded, that the *Captain of their Salvation* Himself *was made Perfect by Sufferings*; as the Apostle saith, *Heb.* 2. 10. That He took the Cross in the way to His Crown. That *He was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief* before He could enter upon the possession of *That Joy which was set before Him*: That *He entred into the Kingdom of* Heaven, *through much Tribulation.*

Nor can they think that GOD hath any Reason, to be more Tender of *them* than of His Dear *Son*; nor imagine themselves ill dealt with, if it fareth no worse with *them* than it did with *Him.* Or, if God will have them go the same Uneasie Way to Eternal Bliss, that *He* went. They can not see the least Cause to complain, if He will have the Members to be conformed to their Head in all respects in *this* World, as well as in the World to come.

Those are therefore very imprudent, that because of their *having* suffered

ſuffered Severe things, preſume upon a long Reſpite from the like again. It is poſſible they may have ſuch a Reſpite, but it ought not to be with any Confidence Expected; becauſe there is no Reaſon on which to found ſuch an Expectation, as hath been ſhewed.

And (by the way) it would be a very great Folly, in reference to the *Publick*, to Conclude upon Happy Times, if we were once eaſed of our preſent Burdens and Complaints, and Effectually Secured from our preſent Fears. For when we are biggeſt with hopes of a moſt Proſperous State of Affairs, and that *God will make us Glad, according to the days wherein he hath Afflicted us, and the years wherein we have ſeen Evil*, ſome unthought of Calamity may Suddenly Seize us; as we have again and again found by Experience. For how *often* have we ſeen cauſe to ſay with the Prophet, *We looked for Peace, but no good came; and for a time of Health, but behold Trouble! Jer.* 8. 15. And to allude

to *that* in the 18*th*. V. *Many a time, when we have been Comforting our ſelves againſt more Sorrow*, there hath preſently happened one Croſs thing or other, which hath Cauſed *our Hearts to Faint in us*. And ſo, no doubt, it will be for the *future* with us, if we continue as Unreformed as Ever. Except our Good God ſhould give us Over, for an Obdurate and incorrigible People, and no farther concern Himſelf for our Amendment. But, as hath been intimated, *this* is the Saddeſt of *all* Judgments; and it ſpeaks Eternal Deſtruction to be Seal'd upon thoſe People, upon whom it lighteth.

But to return to the Matter in hand; We ſeeing ſo great Reaſon, while we remain in this World, to look for New Afflictions, it greatly Concerns us to be ſtill preparing our ſelves for them, that they may not come upon us before we are Aware. For whenſoever they do ſo, we ſhall find them ſo much the Heavier and more Intolerable; and that it requires much

much the longer time for the ſo ſubduing our Paſſions to our Reaſon, as to be able to demean our ſelves decently, and as becomes *Men*, and much more as becomes *Chriſtians*, under them.

As the Son of *Sirach* ſaith, *Eccles.* 41. 1. *O Death, how bitter is the Remembrance of thee, to a Man that liveth at Reſt in his Poſſeſſions; unto the Man who hath nothing to Vex him, and that hath Proſperity in all things!* So may it be ſaid, How bitter, how unſupportable, is a great Affliction to a Man, when it falleth upon him all of a *Suddain*; when he thought of nothing leſs, than *Afflictions!* How *Weak* doth a Sad Providence find a Man, when at the time of its comming he had *Put far from him the Evil day*, and did not in the leaſt dream of any Alteration of his Condition!

What a Horrible Surprize muſt it have been to the *Rich man* in the Goſpel (had it been no Parable but a real Hiſtory) to hear thoſe words, *Thou Foool this night ſhall thy Soul be required of thee, then whoſe ſhall thoſe*

Things be, which thou haſt Provided? at that very inſtant, when he was ſaying to himſelf, *Thou haſt Goods laid up for many Years; Take thine Eaſe, Eat, Drink and be Merry!*

Fourthly, I infer from the *Text*, what a Wonderfully Powerful Motive, the Hopes we have of Receiving ſuch Glorious Things in the *Future* life, muſt needs be, *To Receive Evil things at the Hand of God* in *this* life. If our Receiving the Good things of this *Preſent* State, be ſuch a Motive thereto as hath been ſhewed, then *What* a Motive is that of the Hope of infinitely better Things in that to *come!*

I Confeſs that the Motive in the *Text* hath the Advantage, as the Matter there of is Things *preſent*, and the Matter of the other, Things to *come:* But conſidering all the *other* differences, between theſe *two* ſorts of Good things; and that there is the greateſt aſſurance imaginable given to good People, of their hereafter Receiving thoſe Good things, there is no

no Compariſon to be made between *this* and *that* Motive.

It is impoſſible, that *he* ſhould think *God* a Severe Maſter, let him meet with never ſo many Evil things in this World, who hath a Sure and Certain Hope of *Ere long* Receiving ſuch Good things, as *Paſs all Underſtanding*: As *the Eye of Man never ſaw, nor his Ear ever heard, nor his Heart is able to Conceive* any *like* unto them.

It muſt needs make this *Vale of Tears*, not only a Tolerable but a Pleaſant Place, to Conſider, that at the End thereof is the *Mount of Joy*: *Of Joy Unſpeakable and full of Glory.* And that theſe (comparatively ſpeaking) *Light Afflictions which are but for a Moment, will work out for us* (if we are not inexcuſably wanting to our ſelves) *a far more exceeding and Eternal weight of Glory.*

Fifthly, I infer, How unreaſonable it is, to have the lower and more undervaluing thoughts of the Divine Goodneſs and Beneficence, and the leſs Senſe of our Obligations to God,

in regard of the *Evils* wherewith our Good things are mixed, and our Earthly Comforts are allayed. The great unreasonableness hereof will appear by the following Considerations, over and above *those* we have been presented with from the words of the Text.

I. Very many, and perhaps the incomparably greater part of the Evils we suffer, are not from the *mere*, or *immediate* Providence of God. It is Certain, that innumerable are of Mens *own* inflicting upon themselves. And not only *deserved* by them, but also the necessary Effects of their Sinning, or of their Inadvertency.

We will take *Poverty* for one Instance. For the *most* part, we may well adventure to say, Men fall into it from Plentiful Fortunes, through their wicked or foolish wasting their Estates; by either Spending them upon their Lusts, or their rash Engaging for Non-Solvent Persons, or their Improvidence, Idleness and Mindlessness of their Business. Where *one* is brought to

to great Want, by the *mere* Providence of God, our obſervation I believe will tell us of *Many*, who ought to impute it to *themſelves* immediately.

Let *Sickneſs* be another Inſtance. Men, for Certain, do ordinarily fall into Diſeaſes, by doing what they *ought not* to do, or neglecting what they *ought* to do, and for want of due Care and Caution.

From whence do too Commonly the Tormenting Diſeaſes of the *Gout* and *Stone*, and the *Dropſy* and *Conſumption* come, but from mens offending as to the Quantity or Quality of their Liquors; or from ſuch other Cauſes as by a greater *Care* of themſelves might have been Prevented?

Feavers are ſome of the moſt common Diſeaſes, but are they not ordinarily Occaſioned, either by ſome intemperance in Meats or Drinks, or Exerciſe; or unſeaſonable Drinking when *Over hot*, or not taking care to cool by *degrees*, and the like? And I am perſwaded, that in reflecting

upon the Cauſes of our Sickneſſes of *moſt* kinds, there are few of us who are not ſenſible, that they were the *natural* Conſequents of ſome Sin or Imprudence or other, much more frequently, than of that which was wholly unavoidable.

Except in the Caſe of the *Airs* being infected with Peſtilential or Malignant Vapours, we have great reaſon to think, that the much greater Number are laid upon *Sick Beds* by the Ordinary Maladies, through ſome Neglect of their Health; and therefore that there may be no more than the *Permiſſive* Hand of God in their being deprived thereof.

When we ſuffer in our *Reputation*, or otherways, from the *Ill will* of others, ought we not too often to thank our ſelves for not being ſo Cautious, as we ſhould have been, of giving them Offence; and to impute it at leaſt to Inconſideration and Raſhneſs as to ſome Actions or Words, which gave occaſion more or leſs, to their being provoked againſt us?

Thoſe

Thoſe that ſuffer from the *Misbehaviour, or Undutifulneſs of their Children* (which muſt needs be, eſpecially to *Good* Men, the greateſt of all Afflictions) are they not, for the moſt part, too well aware, that theſe ſufferings are in a great meaſure owing to *themſelves*; and that they might have had much better Children, if they had ſet them a better Example, and given them better Education?

And I need not add, that the *ſame* is to be ſaid, in reference to the Divine Providence, of *thoſe* Afflictions which do ariſe from our Sympathy with thoſe in Affliction, who are dear to us, when *they* ſuffer through their own default.

And the ſame thing is to be aſſerted of *thoſe* Evils, which we have not brought upon our ſelves, but are occaſioned by the Faults of our *Parents*, or of *ſuch* as whoſe Intereſts and Concerns, are neceſſarily linked together with *ours*; ſo that the *one* cannot ſuffer, but the *other* alſo muſt.

As

As when a Man lives in Penury, by means of his Fathers diſabling himſelf by his Prodigality, Sin, or Folly, to leave him a Subſiſtence. Or when a Trades-man is made a Bankrupt by *his* means, whom he hath taken into Partnerſhip. Or when Parents, having by Debauchery Marred their own Bodies, and vitiated their Conſtitutions, Propagate their Diſeaſes or Weakneſſes, to the Children which are afterwards born of them.

Now I ſay, there is nothing more Unreaſonable, than to think God Almighty the *leſs* Good, in regard of *ſuch* Evils as thoſe now mentioned. And if it be well Conſidered, I cannot, I ſay, doubt but that *moſt* of thoſe which Men complain of, are of that nature.

And what would we have God to do, to keep off ſuch Evils as *theſe*? Would we have him to be continually laying irreſiſtible Reſtreints upon *Free* Agents, ſo as that it ſhall be impoſſible

ſible for them at any time to do wickedly, or at any time to act fooliſhly? If we think that *this* would well become Him, we muſt think at the ſame time, that to *make Free* Agents did *disbecome* Him. But ſuppoſing ſuch Agents ſo left to the *Uſe* of their Liberty, as not to be ſo withheld from either Sinning, or playing the Fools, as that they *can* not do either, the foreſaid and ſuch like Evils will neceſſarily follow from the *Abuſe* thereof. And therefore far be it from us, to have the lower opinion of the Divine Goodneſs upon the account of them.

But I ought to add (in order to our having a juſt Senſe of Gods Goodneſs, and that it may loſe nothing of the Honour *due* to it) that He doth innumerable times prevent by *Special* Providences, our running into thoſe Sins, and thoſe Raſh Actions, which we ſhould moſt Certainly have *otherwiſe* been guilty of. And He doth frequently (and poſſibly *as* often) in a Secret inviſible manner, ſo Overrule

rule *Natural* Cauſes of Evils, as to prevent their producing them, when they were ready to do it. Not only Hiſtory, but many of our Own obſervations, do furniſh us with great Proofs hereof. And if *theſe* Propoſitions were not *both* true, it is not imaginable but that *this* world would be a far more intolerable Place than it is, Conſidering how it Abounds with Wickedneſs, and how Corrupt Human Nature is in this lapſed State, and what Fooliſh & Heady Creatures the Generality of Mankind are, and what Dangers we are always Encompaſſed with. And the *worſt* objection we can make againſt Almighty God, for not always thus interpoſing, is, that He will not have His Goodneſs in any one inſtance, to thwart and contradict that *Wiſdom* by which He Governs the World.

But ſuppoſe we *waved* the Conſideration of the Divine *Wiſdom* in the Caſe, what Reaſon can we have to complain of God's deficiency in *Goodneſs*, becauſe He is not more concerned to keep Evils off from us, than we

we *our ſelves* are? 'Tis certain, He is much *more* concerned for *our* Good than *we* can be, and *ſad* would it be for us, if He were not; but ſuppoſe Him onely *equally* ſo, we ſhould not have cauſe to think Him wanting to us, but ſhould ſee great Reaſon to Admire His Goodneſs; conſidering that *He* is infinitely Above even the Glorious *Angels*, and can get nothing by *any* of *His* Creatures being Happy, nor loſe any thing by their being Miſerable.

II. Let us *next* Conſider, That, as Abundance of the Evils which Men groan under, are not from the *mere* or *immediate* Providence of God, ſo *very many* things which we are apt to account Evils, and are matter of Diſcontent to us, are *not* Evils. That *Stoical Maxim, Mens Minds are not troubled with Things, but with the Falſe Opinions they have of Things*, would be very true, if it ran *thus, Mens Minds are not* ſo much *troubled with Things*, &c. For there are a multitude of things which greatly diſturb

ſturb men, which are onely Evils of their own making; and which they would make exceeding light of, would they govern themſelves more by Reaſon, than by fond Phanſy, and the Childiſh Opinions of *other* Folk.

To have nothing of Superfluity, but a bare Competency, how many are there who account *this* a great Evil! Tho' the Apoſtle ſaith, *Having Food and Rayment, let us be therewith content.* And we have a good Old Saying, *Nature is content with a little, and Grace with leſs.* How many lay it to heart, as a grievous thing, to be neceſſitated to Earn their Bread with the Sweat of their Brows; nay not to be able to make ſuch a Figure among their Neighbours, as divers of them do! And thereupon they take but ſlight Notice of the innumerable great Mercies which they enjoy; and inſtead of being thankful for them, murmur at the Divine Providence, becauſe they have not all they *would* have.

But as God Almighty asked the peeviſh Prophet, Whether *he did well*

to

to be Angry? I ask *theſe*, Whether they *do well to be diſcontented*, and to have ſo little Senſe of the Bounty of their Great Benefactor? For (not to mind them again, that *whatſoever* the Good things are which they enjoy, they are more than He *oweth* them, or than their Deſerts can claim) they ought to conſider, that the *whole World* is God's Charge, and not only ſome particular Perſons; and that His Goodneſs expreſſeth its ſelf by ſo proportioning His Bleſſings to particulars, as ſhall be moſt for the good of the Whole: And that it would be extremely ill for the Whole, for *all* to be alike Sharers in His Good things.

And it is neceſſary for the Well-being of the whole, that there ſhould be a great Variety of Ranks and Orders of Men: By which means, all neceſſary Offices have People fitted for them.

And, withal, they ought to Conſider, that if it be neceſſary that *many* ſhould be in low Circumſtances, for the performance of the lower and meaner Offices, which yet are every

ry whit as neceſſary as the higher, what Reaſon can they give, why *themſelves* ſhould not be in the Number of thoſe many? And whether, for the ſame Reaſon that they would be placed in one of the higher Orbs, every body elſe may not expect it? *Self-love* is the onely Reaſon, why *They* would be ſo, but why may not *Every* man Love himſelf, as well as *they* love themſelves?

They ought to conſider too, that at *this* rate there could be no pleaſing them. For tho' God ſhould ſtill Humour them, in giving them their deſires, it would but make them riſe, ſtill higher and higher in their Cravings.

It is an Unqueſtionable Truth, that Contentment is not to be fetched from *without*, but from an inward good Frame and Temper of Mind. And therefore we find, that thoſe who are in High Places, are not the *moſt* but the *leaſt* Contented; are far more Ambitious of Riſing ſtill Higher, than thoſe who are in the very *loweſt*. And for the ſame Reaſon, he, who being in

in a Low Condition, is diſcontented becauſe he is not in an higher, will never be ſatisfied till he gets to the very *Top*; nor then neither.

So that, if thy being without ſuch or ſuch Good things, may Reaſonably be a matter of Complaint, or cauſe an Abatement of Gratitude, thou canſt never be put into ſuch Circumſtances, as where in thou wilt ſee cauſe to be very Thankful, or not to Complain.

And I add, that it is highly Worthy of an Infinitely Good God, inſtead of being Repugnant to His Goodneſs, to make ſuch feel *real* Evils, who frame to themſelves ſo many Imaginary Ones: To make thoſe Sufferers in *good earneſt*, who complain of ſuch things as Evils, which are *not* ſo, but at *worſt* in a leſs degree Good things: And to bring Heavy Afflictions on thoſe, who make by their Diſcontent Light Ones Heavy.

III. Conſider that, as you want thoſe Good things which many have, ſo Abundance of thoſe who enjoy

thoſe things, do want others that *you* have. How many that have great Eſtates, and Honourable Titles, are deſtitute of ſome of the moſt *Common* Mercies; by which means they are able to take but little Content, in all their Grandeur! And by which means, Thouſands of the Meaneſt People, would be very unwilling to change Conditions with them. And who knows not, that the moſt common Bleſſings, are the moſt Valuable?

What *Beggar* would loſe his *Eye-ſight*, to be a *Lord*? Who would change his Cottage for a Palace, if he muſt give his Health and his Eaſe into the Bargain? Who would not rather chuſe to ſleep ſweetly upon *Straw*, than to lye Crying out under the Stone or Gout, upon a Bed of *Ivory*? What Wiſe Man would not rather Eat Courſe Fare with a good Stomach and Appetite, than to be ſerved with Great Variety of Choice Diſhes, and unable to Digeſt one of them without Wine, or Reliſh one of them without Sauces?

Nay,

Nay, if we understood what Crosses and Vexations of innumerable kinds, do attend great Estates, and what Dangers High Places are surrounded with, we should greatly pity very Rich and Great Men, instead of Envying them; and think our selves far more Happy with a quiet and a safe Competency.

There is nothing more plainly Observable, than that ordinarily the Meanest Servants of Great People, do enjoy more satisfaction, than their Lords or Ladies.

So that put all things together, tho' there be a vast difference between Men and Men in their external Circumstances, there is but very little difference between them, as to their partaking of the Divine Beneficence.

No Man enjoys *all* Good things, and 'tis commonly seen that he who falls short of another in *some*, as much excells him in *Others*.

IV. Consider how prone we are to make the Good things God blesseth us with, Evils to *our selves*, and

the *greateſt* Evils. That is, to convert our Temporal Good things into Spiritual Evil things; and to make them more Miſchievous to our Souls, than it is poſſible they ſhould be Beneficial to our Outward Man.

. And, as we are all very *prone* hereto, ſo, are not moſt Men *actually* ſo much the more High-minded, Vain, Covetous and Senſual, *&c.* by how much the more they Abound in Earthly Bleſſings? And therefore is God ever the leſs Good to men, in either *depriving* them of thoſe Good things they ſo Abuſe, or in *Withholding* many ſuch from *thoſe*, whom He knows would be in very great *Danger* of Abuſing them, if they had them?

V. Conſider how many do make little Conſcience of *doing Evil* to others; of making them Sufferers in one reſpect or other: And how many of thoſe, who would not be thought Unjuſt or Cruel, can find in their hearts to be Severe and Rigid. And how many that are *better* Natured and better Principled than ſuch Perſons,

ſons, are nothing ſo inclined to Pity the Afflicted and Diſtreſſed, as they ought to be; nor to Concern themſelves to keep off Evils from their Brethren, or to Eaſe them of them, according to their Power.

Now with what *Face* can ſuch Expect, that God Almighty ſhould be ſo Tender of *thoſe*, either in Preventing the lighting of Evils upon them, or in taking them off, when ever they would have Him, who are either Harſh to, or ſo little Tender of their Fellow-Chriſtians, or Fellow-Creatures?

How doth it Diſ-become the Goodneſs of God, to ſay to ſuch, *With what Meaſure you Mete, it ſhall be Meted to you again?*

What *Wretched* People then are they, who Complain of God, for Shewing no more Mercy to *them*, who have no more Mercy for *others*; and that will have Him to be the leſs Good upon this account! Since it is no contradiction to His Goodneſs, to Abandon ſuch to Extreme Sufferings, but an Act moſt worthy of His Juſtice.

VI. It may be Conſidered too, that many of the Evils which befall us, others do Gain more by than the Sufferers loſe; & conſequently, God is more Gracious to others in

them, than He is Severe to those who Suffer by them. We use to say, *That is an Ill Wind, which blows no body good.*

And, *as* we have shewed, that God designs Mens *own* Good in their Sufferings, be they never so bad, provided they have not Sinned themselves past Recovery by Afflictions; and that all that improve them as they ought, do reap great Advantage by them, especially Spiritual Advantage, so hath He Contrived things in so Wise a manner, as that we are Mutually Advantaged by one anothers Afflictions. There may be given a *Thousand* Instances of *this* nature, and therefore it is needless to give *any*.

Now, He that would take a Measure of the Divine Goodness, by what happeneth to *Himself*, Considered as a *Being* Separate from the Rest of Mankind, must be *so Silly* as to think at the same time, that God hath no Body to be Concerned for besides *Himself*.

Now, take we along with *these* Considerations, what hath been Discoursed of the *Fewness* of our Evil things, in Comparison of our Good things: And of our *Non-desert* of the least Good things, but our *High desert* of the Greatest Evils: And of the *Need*

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we all have of Evil things: And of Evil things being appointed us by God Almighty, from the *Self-same Principle* that Good things are; I say, Let *these* accompany our last mentioned Considerations, and *then*, if we are *Able*, let us think it a Tolerable thing to Repine at any of God's Dealings with us; or to *Cease to Praise* Him, and to have a Thankful Sense of our Obligations to Him, under even the *Sharpest* Tryals. *Then* let us think, if we *can*, that *that* Exhortation of the *Psalmist*, may be *sometimes* Unseasonable, *viz. Praise the Lord; for it is Good to Sing Praises unto our God: For it is Pleasant, and Praise is Comely.*

If, after *all* that hath now been Offered to our Consideration, we can perswade our selves *thus* to think, we must Blame holy *Job* for being so offended as his *Wife's Taunt, Bless God and Dye.*

But now, in the *Conclusion*, I must Repeat what hath been already Suggested, and which Sad *Experience* assures us of, *viz.* That it is far more easie to Satisfie our Reason, than to bring our Passions under the Government thereof; and especially in reference to the Bearing of Afflictions. And therefore there

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is an Absolute Necessity of adding, to whatsoever Considerations we are furnished with to Strengthen us under them, our Frequent, Humble, and most Importunate Supplications to the *Throne of Grace*, that we may not under the Afflicting Hand of God, be so Over-Power'd with Melancholy, as to be unable to think a Wise Thought; and to be Inabled so to fix our Minds upon Such Considerations, as that they may make an Effectual Impression; and that we may have Supports suitable to our Burdens; without which, let us Exercise our Thinking Faculty as well as we can, we shall be *as Weak as Water*. And they were great *Divine* Supports to which *Job* was above *all* beholden; or he had never Behaved himself as he did, under Such Mighty Calamities; nor *particularly* given so brave a Reply to his Wifes Prophane Speech, as, *What? Shall we receive Good at the Hand of God, and shall we not receive Evil?*

THE END.